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ABSTRACT

This periodical critiques the traditional views of Christopher Columbus and his voyages to America and looks at current issues that affect Native Americans. More than 50 essays, poems, historical documents, and articles are featured, including: "Columbus and Native Issues in the Elementary Classroom" (Bob Peterson); "Bones of Contention" (Tony Hillerman); "The Sacred Circle" (Black Elk); "Native Americans, What Not to Teach" (June Sark Heinrich); and "Myths That Bind Us: Stereotypes in Children's Literature" (Linda Christensen). The volume also includes an annotated bibliography of resources and a teaching guide. (DB)

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RETHINKING COLUMBUS

TEACHING ABOUT THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF COLUMBUS'S ARRIVAL IN AMERICA

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A SPECIAL ISSUE OF RETHINKING SCHOOLS

DEDICATED TO THE CHILDREN OF THE AMERICAS

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RETHINKING

COLUMBUS

A special edition of Rethinking Schools published by Rethinking Schools, Ltd. in collaboration with the Network of Educators on Central America.

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"Let us put our heads together and see what life we will make for our children."

Tatanka Iotanka
(Sitting Bull, Lakota)

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Why Rethink Columbus?

INTRODUCTION

Why rethink Christopher Columbus? Because the Columbus myth is basic to children's beliefs about society. For many youngsters the tale of Columbus introduces them to a history of this country, even to history itself. The "discovery of America" is children's first curricular exposure to the encounter between two cultures and to the encounter between two races. As such, a study of Columbus is really a study about us — how we think about each other, our country, and our relations with people around the world.

The Columbus myth teaches children which voices to listen for as they go out into the world — and whose to ignore. Pick up a children's book on Columbus: See Chris; see Chris talk; see Chris grow up, have ideas, have feelings. In these volumes, the native peoples of the Caribbean, the "discovered," don't think or feel. And thus children begin a scholastic journey that encourages them to disregard the perspectives, the very humanity, of people of color.

In *Rethinking Columbus* we've tried to fill some of these silences. Our goal was not to idealize native people and demonize Europeans, or present a depressing litany of victimization. We wanted to encourage a deeper understanding of the European invasion's consequences, honor the rich legacy of resistance to the injustices it created, and convey some appreciation for the diverse cultures of the original inhabitants of the hemisphere. Our goal in *Rethinking Columbus* is not to present "two sides," but to tell the part of the story that has been neglected.

We have also tried to provide a forum for native people to tell some of their side of the encounter — through interviews, poetry, analysis, and stories. Columbus's arrival began an American holocaust. If the writers and activists we've included seem angry it's because they have something to be angry about. The passionless prose of textbook accounts seems particularly inappropriate considering the scale of injustice. We had no intention of reproducing it.

It would be nice to think that the ugly biases in the curriculum disappear after Columbus. But Columbus is only the beginning of a winners' history that profoundly neglects the lives and perspectives of all the *Others*, not just people of color: women, working class people, the poor. A number of selections in *Rethinking Columbus* draw attention to how this happens and suggest ways to enlist students in a broader critique.

Columbus is dead, but his legacy is not. "Considering the beauty of the land, it could not be but that there was gain to be got," Columbus wrote in 1492. From the ecologically devastating James Bay hydro-power project in Quebec, to the poisonous chemical dumps of Louisiana, to the massive clear cutting of ancient forests in Central and South America, Columbus's exploitative spirit lives on — with a vengeance. Likewise, the slave system Columbus introduced to this hemisphere was ultimately overthrown, but not the calculus that weighs human lives in terms of private profit.

Contemporary Resistance

We've featured essays and interviews that underscore contemporary resistance to the spirit of Columbus. It's vital we don't approach these issues as if to say, "That was horrible. Glad we're all done with it." We believe children need to be inspired by the knowledge that, while injustice persists, so does the struggle for humanity and the environment.

In a very real sense, most of us are living on stolen land. However, this knowledge must not be used to make white children feel guilty. There is nothing students can do to change history. And they should not feel responsible for what others did before they were born. However, we hope the materials in *Rethinking Columbus* will help you communicate the lesson that people of *all* colors do have a responsibility to learn from history. We can choose whether to reverse the legacy of injustice or continue it. This is one reason we have made efforts to feature people, past and present, who have chosen to stand for justice.

What passes for discovery in the traditional Columbus myth was really an invasion. It deserves no celebration. However, the study of Columbus and the native peoples of America offers numerous opportunities for genuine discovery. Western economies have failed utterly to protect the earth. We can encourage students to discover from Native Americans new ways of understanding relationships between society and nature. Even the very words used by different cultures to describe the natural world are suggestive: compare the West's "environment" — something which surrounds us — to native peoples' "Mother Earth" — she who gives us life. Native views of the earth challenge students to locate new worlds of ecological hope.

Through critiquing textbook and other traditional accounts of Columbus's voyages, students can begin to discover the excitement that comes from asserting oneself morally and intellectually — refusing to be passive consumers of "official" stories. And this is as true for fourth graders as it is for juniors in high school. They can continue to renew and deepen this personal awakening as they seek out other curricular silences and sources of knowledge.

We hope *Rethinking Columbus* begins to suggest a relationship between the critical and collaborative classrooms described in the booklet's articles and a movement to discover — or, more accurately, to invent — a new world. These new ways of teaching and learning can indicate that, as author Barry Lopez writes, "500 years later, we intend to mean something else in the world." Rethinking and reconstructing the way students and teachers understand today's society *is* cause for celebration.

From the beginning, we knew that time and space constraints as well as our own social blinders would silence some voices that need to be heard: Did our selection of readings portray native peoples too much as victims and fail to adequately celebrate the vitality, the tenacity, of native cultures? Did we focus too heavily on the U.S. experience and neglect other important contemporary struggles for self-determination in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America? Should we have focused more on the African consequences of Columbus's voyages? Should we have given a Latino perspective on the quincentenary more prominence?

These and other doubts still trouble us. We offer this as a beginning — our small contribution to a many-sided and ongoing discussion about the future. We hope *Rethinking Columbus* will make it a bit easier for you to add your voice to that discussion. ❐

Interview with Suzan Shown Harjo

"We Have No Reason to Celebrate an Invasion"

Suzan Shown Harjo is president and director of the Morning Star Foundation in Washington, D.C. The foundation sponsors the 1992 Alliance, formed to provide an indigenous peoples' response to the Columbus Quincentenary. Harjo, a 45-year-old Cheyenne-Creek, agreed to answer questions about why some people are not celebrating the quincentenary. She was interviewed by Barbara Miner of Rethinking Schools.

Standing before a replica of the Niña, activist Russell Means protests exhibit on Spain's early involvement in the Americas.

Why aren't you joining in the celebrations of the Columbus quincentenary?

As Native American peoples in this red quarter of Mother Earth, we have no reason to celebrate an invasion that caused the demise of so many of our people and is still causing destruction today. The Europeans stole our land and killed our people.

But because the quincentenary is a cause celebre, it provides an opportunity to put forth Native American perspectives on the next 500 years.

Columbus was just "a man of his times." Why are you so critical of him? Why not look at the positive aspects of his legacy?

For people who are in survival mode, it's very difficult to look at the positive aspects of death and destruction, especially when it is carried through to our present. There is a reason we are the poorest people in America. There is a reason we have the highest teen suicide rate. There is a reason why our people are ill-housed and in poor health, and we do not live as long as the majority population.

That reason has to do with the fact that we were in the way of Western civilization and we were in the way of westward expansion. We suffered the "excesses" of civilization such as murder, pillage, rape, destruction of the major waterways, destruction of land, the destruction and pollution of the air.

What are those "positive" aspects of the Columbus legacy? If we're talking about the horse, yeah, that's good. We like the horse. Indians raised the use of the horse to high military art, especially among the Cheyenne people and the tribes of the plains states.

Was that a good result of that invasion? Yes. Is it something we would have traded for the many Indian peoples who are no longer here because of that invasion? No.

We also like the beads that came from Europe, and again we raised their use to a high art. Would we have traded those beads for the massacres of our people, such as the Sand Creek massacre [in which U.S. soldiers massacred hundreds of Native American men, women, and children at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1864]? No.

Why do we focus on Columbus rather than any number of U.S. presidents who were also responsible for the death and destruction of Indian people? Because it's his 500 years; it's his quincentenary.

Isn't criticism of Columbus a form of picking on the Spaniards. Were they any worse than other Europeans who came to America?

In my estimation, the Spaniards were no worse than any number of other Europeans. The economy of slavery and serfdom that existed in northern Europe — how do you measure that in cruelty and in long-term effects against the Spanish Inquisition?

I view the issue more as the oppressive nature and arrogance of the Christian religions. And that continues today.

Our Indian religions are not missionary religions. We are taught to respect other religions. It was a shock when we were met with proselytizing zealots, especially those who thought that if your soul can't be saved, you're better off dead — or if your soul can be saved, you should be dead so you can go

to heaven. And that's the history of that original encounter.

How does that arrogance and ignorance manifest itself today?

How? Well, for example, the Catholic Church has said that 1992 is a time to enter into a period of grace and healing and to celebrate the evangelization of the Americas. My word, how can you be graceful and healing about the tens of thousands of native people who were killed because they would not convert to a religion they didn't understand, or because they didn't understand the language of those making the request?

It's difficult to take seriously an apology that is not coupled with atonement. It's as if they're saying, "I'm sorry, oops, and we'll be better in the next hemisphere." That doesn't cut it. We've had empty platitudes before.

The combination of arrogance and ignorance also results in making mascots of Indian people, of dehumanizing and stereotyping them — in the sports world, in advertising, and in society at large. The Washington Redskins football team is an excellent example.

There is no more derogatory name in English for Indian people than the name Redskins. And the Redskins is a prominent image right here in the nation's capital that goes by unnoticed. Because we are an invisible population, the racism against us is also invisible for the most part.

You don't see sports teams called the White Trash, the Black Chicks, the Jew Boys, or the Jack Mormons. And if we did see that, it wouldn't be for long, you can be sure of that.

Why can't we use the Columbus quincentenary to celebrate American diversity and the contributions of all, Europeans and Native Americans alike?

There will be lots of people who will be putting forth the perspective of rah rah Columbus, rah rah Western Civilization. Our perspective is putting forth native peoples' views on our past and present. We also want to get into the public consciousness the notion that we actually have a future on this planet. This is something missed by even what is hailed as the most progressive of American movies, *Dances with Wolves*.

We're more interested in the 500 years before Columbus and what will go on in the next 500 years. The truth of the intervening 500 years is really known in the hearts of people worldwide, even though the particulars have been obscured by a cotton-candy version of history.

Aren't some of the criticisms of Columbus just substituting Native-centrism for Euro-centrism?

Oppressed people need to be centered within themselves. Racism and centrism become a problem if you are in the dominant society and are subjugating other people as a result of your centrism. I don't accept the question. I think it's an empty argument.

Aren't criticisms of Columbus just another form of insuring "political correctness?"

The Eurocentric view, having been exposed for its underlying falsehood, now wishes to oppose any other view as either equally false or simply the flip side of reality: a secondary or dual reality.

Feelings are usually dual realities; perspectives are dual realities. But there are some things that don't have a dual reality. For example, if we look at who has polluted all of our water, causing a whole lot of death and a whole lot of illness in this country alone, then we have a bit of a clue where the problem might rest. We have a clue whose reality might expose the truth and whose reality might obscure the truth.

It's about time for the people who are the true historic revisionists, who are on the far right side of this whole political correctness debate, to stop lying to themselves, to their readership and to their students. They must stop their silly ivory tower kinds of debates about whether multiculturalism should be used, and so forth.

What is the true history? Just start dealing with some undisputable realities. The world is a mess. This country is a mess. The people who fare the worst in this country are poor, non-white children and poor, non-white old people. Societies who do not care for their young people and old people are decadent, decaying societies.

I think there are a lot of good minds that are reflecting that decadence and decay when they choose to spend their time on these kinds of ivory tower debates. There are things about which they can do much, and they are doing nothing.

What should be the goal and perspective of teachers when telling their elementary and high school students about Columbus?

First, that no one knows the truth about Columbus. His story is a very complex history in and of itself. Too often, this history is posed as romantic myth, and the uncomfortable facts about Columbus are eliminated.

Explaining the unpleasant truths about Columbus does not take away from the fact that he was able to lurch over to these shores in three little boats. In fact, it gives the story of Columbus more dimension. It also makes it easier for kids in school to accept not only Columbus but other things.

Teachers need to respect the truth. What happens if I'm sitting in a classroom and teachers are telling me that Thomas Jefferson was one of the greatest men in the world, and I also know that he owned slaves, but they don't tell me that? What am I going to do when I'm told "don't use or abuse drugs or alcohol"? Will I think there may be another side to that too? What else am I being told that isn't true?

Kids are smart. And they have not experienced enough setbacks to know that they have to be sheep. But that's what they're taught in the public schools — how to exercise not personal discipline, but top-down discipline. It's the "do as you're told" approach to the world, rather than trying to help kids understand their place in the world.

We have to inject more truth in the classroom generally. And that only comes from discussion. I guess I'm a fan of the Socratic method.

What are the key struggles that native people face today?

We need, in the first instance, basic human rights such as religious freedom. Or how about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and other things that many people in the United States view as standard fare but are out of reach for Indian people?

There is also the issue of land and treaty rights. We have property that we don't own and we should, and we have property that we own that we don't control and we should.

We have treaties with the United States that are characterized in the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the land. Yet every one, without exception, of nearly 400 treaties signed between native peoples and the U.S. government has been broken. Every one of them.

A good place to start would be for the United States to live up to every treaty agreement. It's also the way you get at resolving some of the problems of poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, and poor health.

If we don't handle the big things, we can't get to the manifestations of the problem. We have to go to the basic human rights issues, the basic treaty rights issues.

If we don't resolve these issues, then all people in this country are going to be complicit in the continuing effort to wipe out our Indian people. It's as simple as that. ❐

Discovering Columbus: Re-reading the Past

By Bill Bigelow

Most of my students have trouble with the idea that a book — especially a *textbook* — can lie. That's why I start my U.S. history class by stealing a student's purse.

As the year opens, my students may not know when the Civil War was fought or what James Madison or Frederick Douglass did; but they know that a brave fellow named Christopher Columbus discovered America. Indeed, this bit of historical lore may be the only knowledge class members share in common.

What students don't know is that their textbooks have, by omission or otherwise, lied to them. They don't know, for example, that on the island of Hispaniola, an entire race of people was wiped out in only 40 years of Spanish administration.

Finders, Keepers

So I begin class by stealing a student's purse. I announce that the purse is mine, obviously, because look who has it. Most students are fair-minded. They saw me take the purse off the desk so they protest: "That's not yours, it's Nikki's. You took it. We saw you." I brush these objections aside and reiterate that it is, too, mine and to prove it, I'll show all the things I have inside.

I unzip the bag and remove a brush or a comb, maybe a pair of dark glasses. A tube of lipstick works best: "This is my lipstick," I say. "There, that proves it *is* my purse." They don't buy it and, in fact, are mildly outraged that I would pry into someone's possessions with such utter disregard for her privacy. (I've alerted the student to the demonstration before the class, but no one else knows that.)

It's time to move on: "OK, if it's Nikki's purse, how do you know? Why are you all so positive it's not my purse?" Different answers: We saw you take it; that's her lipstick, we know you don't wear lipstick; there is stuff in there with her name on it. To get the point across, I even offer to help in their effort to prove Nikki's possession: "If we had a test on the contents of the purse, who would do better, Nikki or I?" "Whose labor earned the money that bought the things in the purse, mine or Nikki's?" Obvious questions, obvious answers.

I make one last try to keep Nikki's purse: "What if I said I *discovered* this purse, then would it be mine?" A little laughter is my reward, but I don't get any takers; they still think the purse is rightfully Nikki's.

"So," I ask, "Why do we say that Columbus discovered America?"

Was it Discovery?

Now they begin to see what I've been leading up to. I ask a series of questions which implicitly link Nikki's purse and the Indians' land: Were there people on the land before Columbus arrived? Who had been on the land longer, Columbus or the Indians? Who knew the land better? Who put their labor into making the land produce? The students see where I'm going — it would be hard not to. "And yet," I continue, "What is the first thing that Columbus did when he arrived in the New World?" Right: he took possession of it. After all, he had discovered the place.

We talk about phrases other than "discovery" that textbooks could use to describe what Columbus did. Students start with phrases they used to describe what I did to Nikki's purse: He stole it; he took it; he ripped it off. And others: He invaded it; he conquered it.

I want students to see that the word "discovery" is loaded. The word itself carries a perspective; a bias. "Discovery" is the phrase of the supposed discoverers. It's the invaders masking their theft. And when the word gets repeated in textbooks, those textbooks become, in the phrase of one historian, "the propaganda of the winners."

To prepare students to examine textbooks critically, we begin with alternative, and rather un-sentimental, explorations of Columbus's "enterprise," as he called it. The Admiral-to-be was not sailing for mere ad-

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venture and to prove the world was round, as I learned in fourth grade, but to secure the tremendous profits that were to be made by reaching the Indies.

Mostly I want the class to think about the human beings Columbus was to "discover" — and then destroy. I read from a letter Columbus wrote to Lord Raphael Sanchez, treasurer of Aragón, and one of his patrons, dated March 14, 1493, following his return from the first voyage. He reports being enormously impressed by the indigenous people:

As soon...as they see that they are safe and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest and exceedingly liberal with all they have; none of them refusing anything he [sic] may possess when he is asked for it, but, on the contrary, inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love toward all others in preference to themselves. They also give objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with very little or nothing in return...I did not find, as some of us had expected, any cannibals among them, but, on the contrary, men of great deference and kindness. (1)

But, on an ominous note, Columbus writes in his log, *"...should your Majesties command it, all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile [Spain], or made slaves on the island. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."* (2)

I ask students if they remember from elementary school days what Columbus brought back from the New World. Students recall that he returned with parrots, plants, some gold, and a few of the people Columbus had taken to calling "Indians". This was Columbus's first expedition and it is also where most school textbook accounts of Columbus end — conveniently. What about his second voyage?

I read to them a passage from Hans Koning's fine book, *Columbus: His Enterprise:*

We are now in February 1495. Time was short for sending back a good 'dividend' on the supply ships getting ready for the return to Spain. Columbus therefore turned to a massive slave raid as a means for filling up these ships. The [Columbus] brothers rounded up 1,500 Arawaks — men, women, and children — and imprisoned them in pens in Isabela, guarded by men and dogs. The ships had room for no more than five hundred, and thus only the best specimens were loaded aboard. The Admiral then told the Spaniards they could help themselves from the remainder to as many slaves as they wanted. Those whom no one chose were simply kicked out of their pens. Such had been the terror of these prisoners that (in the description by Michele de Cuneo, one of the colonists) 'they rushed in all directions like lunatics, women dropping and abandoning infants in the rush, running for miles without stopping, fleeing across mountains and rivers.'

Of the 500 slaves, 300 arrived alive in Spain, where they were put up for sale in Seville by Don Juan de Fonseca, the archdeacon of the town. 'As naked as the day they were born,' the report of this excellent churchman says, 'but with no more embarrassment than animals...'

The slave trade immediately turned out to be 'unprofitable, for the slaves mostly died.' Columbus decided to concentrate on gold, although he writes, 'Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold.' (emphasis in Koning) (3)

Certainly Columbus's fame should not be limited to the discovery of America: he also deserves credit for initiating the trans-Atlantic slave trade, albeit in the opposite direction than we're used to thinking of it.

Looking Through Different Eyes

Students and I role play a scene from Columbus's second voyage. Slavery is not producing the profits Columbus is seeking. He believes there is gold in them thar hills and the Indians are selfishly holding out on him.

Students play Columbus; I play the Indians: "Chris, we don't have any gold, honest. Can we go back to living our lives now and you can go back to wherever you came from?"

I call on several students to respond to the Indians' plea. Columbus thinks the Indians are lying. Student responses range from sympathetic to ruthless: OK, we'll go home; *please* bring us your gold; we'll lock you up in prison if you don't bring us your gold; we'll torture you if you don't fork it over, etc.

After I've pleaded for awhile and the students-as-Columbus have threatened, I read aloud another passage from Koning's book describing Columbus's system for extracting gold from the Indians:

Every man and woman, every boy or girl of fourteen or older, in the province of Cibao ...had to collect gold for the Spaniards. As their measure, the Spaniards used...hawks' bells...Every three months, every Indian had to bring to one of the forts a hawks' bell filled with gold dust. The chiefs had to bring in about ten times that amount. In the other provinces of Hispaniola, twenty five pounds of spun cotton took the place of gold.

Copper tokens were manufactured, and when an Indian had brought his or her tribute to an armed post, he or she received such a token, stamped with the month, to be hung

16th Century illustration of Spanish cruelty toward Native Americans.

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around the neck. With that they were safe for another three months while collecting more gold.

Whoever was caught without a token was killed by having his or her hands cut off. ...

There were no gold fields, and thus, once the Indians had handed in whatever they still had in gold ornaments, their only hope was to work all day in the streams, washing out gold dust from the pebbles. It was an impossible task, but those Indians who tried to flee into the mountains were systematically hunted down with dogs and killed, to set an example for the others to keep trying....

During those two years of the administration of the brothers Columbus, an estimated one half of the entire population of Hispaniola was killed or killed themselves. The estimates run from one hundred and twenty-five thousand to one-half million. (4)

The goal is not to titillate or stun, but to force the question: Why wasn't I told this before?

> *If you dis•cov•er that some among them steal, you must punish them by cutting off nose and ears, for those are parts of the Body which cannot be concealed.*
>
> *Christopher Columbus, 1494*

Credit: 1492

Re-examining Basic Truths

I ask students to find a textbook, preferably one they used in elementary school, and critique the book's treatment of Columbus and the Indians. I distribute the following handout and review the questions aloud. I don't want them to merely answer the questions, but to consider them as guidelines.

- How factually accurate was the account?
- What was omitted — left out — that in your judgment would be important for a full understanding of Columbus? (for example, his treatment of the Indians; slave taking; his method of getting gold; the overall effect on the Indians.)
- What motives does the book give to Columbus? Compare those with his real motives.
- Who does the book get you to root for, and how do they accomplish that? (for example, are the books horrified at the treatment of Indians or thrilled that Columbus makes it to the New World?)
- How do the publishers use illustrations? What do they communicate about Columbus and his "enterprise"?
- In your opinion, *why* does the book portray the Columbus/Indian encounter the way it does?
- Can you think of any groups in our society who might have an interest in people having an inaccurate view of history?

I tell students that this last question is tough but crucial. Is the continual distortion of Columbus simply an accident, or are there social groups who benefit from children developing a false or limited understanding of the past?

The assignment's subtext is to teach students that text material, indeed all written material, should be read skeptically. I want students to explore the politics of print — that perspectives on history and social reality underlie the written word, and that to read is both to comprehend what is written, but also to question *why* it is written. My intention is not to encourage an 'I-don't-believe-anything' cynicism (5), but rather to equip students to analyze a writer's assumptions and determine what is and isn't useful in any particular work.

For practice, we look at excerpts from a California textbook that belonged to my brother in the fourth grade, *The Story of American Freedom*, published by Macmillan in 1964. We read aloud and analyze several paragraphs. The arrival of Columbus and crew is especially revealing — and obnoxious. As is true in every book on the "discovery" that I've ever encountered, the reader watches events from the Spaniard's point of view. We are told how Columbus and his men "fell upon their knees and gave thanks to God," a passage included in virtually all elementary school accounts of Columbus. "He then took possession of it [the island] in the name of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain." (6) No question is raised of Columbus's right to assume control over a land which was already occupied. The account is so respectful of the Admiral that students can't help but sense it approves of what is, quite simply, an act of naked imperialism.

The book keeps us close to God and the Church throughout its narrative. Upon returning from the New World, Columbus shows off his parrots and Indians. Immediately following the show, "the king and queen lead the way to a near-by church. There a song of praise and thanksgiving is sung." (7) Intended or not, linking church and Columbus removes him still further from criticism.

Students' Conclusions

I give students a week before I ask them to bring in their written critiques. Students share their papers with one another in small groups. They take notes towards what my co-teacher, Linda Christensen, and I call the "collective text": What themes recur in the papers and what important differences emerge? What did they discover about textbook treatments of Columbus? Here are some excerpts:

Matthew wrote:

As people read their evaluations the same situations in these textbooks came out. Things were conveniently left out so that you sided with Columbus's quest to 'boldly go where no man has gone before'...None of the harsh violent reality is confronted in these so-called true accounts.

Gina tried to explain why the books were so consistently rosy:

It seemed to me as if the publishers had just printed up some 'glory story' that was supposed to make us feel more patriotic about our country. In our group, we talked about the possibility of the government trying to protect young students from such violence. We soon decided that that was probably one of the farthest things from their minds. They want us to look at our country as great, and powerful, and forever right. They want us to believe Columbus was a real hero. We're

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being fed lies. We don't question the facts, we just absorb information that is handed to us because we trust the role models that are handing it out.

Rebecca's collective text reflected the general tone of disillusion with the textbooks:

Of course, the writers of the books probably think it's harmless enough — what does it matter who discovered America, really; and besides, it makes them feel good about America. But the thought that I have been lied to all my life about this, and who knows what else, really makes me angry.

Why Do We Do This?

The reflections on the collective text became the basis for a class discussion. Repeatedly, students blasted their textbooks for giving readers inadequate, and ultimately untruthful, understandings. While we didn't press to arrive at definitive explanations for the omissions and distortions, we tried to underscore the contemporary abuses of historical ignorance. If the books wax romantic about Columbus planting the flag on island beaches and taking possession of land occupied by naked red-skinned Indians, what do young readers learn from this about today's world? That might — or wealth — makes right? That it's justified to take people's land if you are more "civilized" or have a "better" religion?

Whatever the answers, the textbooks condition students to accept inequality; nowhere do they suggest that the Indians were sovereign peoples with a right to control their own lands. And, if Columbus's motives are mystified or ignored, then students are less apt to question U.S. involvements in, say, Central America or the Middle East. As Bobby, approaching his registration day for the military draft, pointed out in class: "If people thought they were going off to war to fight for profits, maybe they wouldn't fight as well, or maybe they wouldn't go."

It's important to note that some students are troubled by these myth-popping discussions. One student wrote that she was "left not knowing who to believe." Josh was the most articulate in his skepticism. He had begun to "read" our class from the same critical distance from which we hoped students would approach textbooks:

I still wonder...If we can't believe what our first grade teachers told us, why should we believe you? If they lied to us, why wouldn't you? If one book is wrong, why isn't another? What is your purpose in telling us about how awful Chris was? What interest do you have in telling us the truth? What is it you want from us?

An idealized version of Columbus being greeted by the Indians.

They were wonderful questions. Linda and I responded by reading them (anonymously) to the entire class. We asked students to take a few minutes to write additional questions and comments on the Columbus activities or to imagine our response as teachers — what *was* the point of our lessons?

We hoped students would see that the intent was to present a new way of reading, and ultimately, of experiencing the world. Textbooks fill students with information masquerading as final truth and then ask students to parrot back the information in end of the chapter "checkups". The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire calls it the "banking method": students are treated as empty vessels waiting for deposits of wisdom from textbooks and teachers. (8) We wanted to tell students that they shouldn't necessarily trust the "authorities," but instead need to participate in their learning, probing for unstated assumptions and unasked questions.

Josh asked what our "interest" was in this approach. It's a vital question. Linda and I see teaching as political action: we want to equip students to build a truly democratic society. As Freire writes, to be an actor for social change one must "read the word and the world." (9) We hope that if a student maintains a critical distance from the written word, then it's possible to maintain that same distance from one's society: to stand back, look hard and ask, "Why is it like this? How can I make it better?" ❐

Bill Bigelow teaches at Jefferson High School in Portland, Oregon.

Notes

1. The Annals of America, Volume 1: 1493-1754, *Discovering a New World*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968, pp. 2,4.

2. Quoted in Hans Koning, *Columbus: His Enterprise*, Monthly Review Press, 1976, pp. 53-54. As Koning points out, none of the information included in his book is new. It is available in Columbus's own journals and letters and the writings of the Spanish priest, Bartolomé de las Casas.

3. Koning, pp. 84-85.

4. Koning, pp. 85-87.

5. It's useful to keep in mind the distinction between cynicism and skepticism. As Norman Diamond writes, "In an important respect, the two are not even commensurable. Skepticism says, 'You'll have to show me, otherwise I'm dubious'; it is open to engagement and persuasion...Cynicism is a removed perspective, a renunciation of any responsibility." See Norman Diamond, "Against Cynicism in Politics and Culture," in *Monthly Review*, Vol. 28, #2, June, 1976, p. 40.

6. Edna McGuire, *The Story of American Freedom*, Macmillan Co, 1964, p. 24.

7. McGuire, p.26.

8. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York, 1970.

9. Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, Bergin and Garvey, MA, 1987.

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America to Indians: Stay in the 19th Century

By Jan Elliott

As I was leaving the theater after my first viewing of *Dances With Wolves*, I happened to be walking between two white couples. All of them were raving about how wonderful the movie was and how "accurately" it had portrayed the Indians. One of the men said, "I'm so ashamed of this culture that we live in and how it *treated* (past tense) the Indians. If I had been around back then, I would have fought on the side of the Indians."

I couldn't resist asking, "Where were you guys this summer when 4,000 heavily armed Canadian soldiers were sent into Oka to take 250 Mohawk Indians, most of whom were women and children, and where have you been since 1986 when the U.S. government started its forced removal of the Hopi/Navajo people from their lands at Big Mountain?" His reply was, "Oh, I don't mean those kind of Indians, I meant the real Indians."

Ignoring Modern-day Indians

I started to wonder why a movie such as *Dances With Wolves* became the major event of 1991 and why a movie such as *Powwow Highway*, which has become a cult classic in Indian country, has been virtually ignored by white America. The answer is that white America doesn't want to know about or even recognize modern-day Indians; it doesn't want to deal with the problems that the reservation system has created in the way of extreme poverty, hopelessness, created dependency, and alcohol and drug addiction that for many are the only way out of the concentration camp horror of their reserves or homelands (called reservations in America).

As Vine Deloria says in chapter three of *God is Red:*

The tragedy of America's Indians — that is, the Indians that America loves, and loves to read about — is that they no longer exist, except in the pages of books. Rather, the modern Indians dress much the same as any other person, attend pretty much the same schools, work at many of the same jobs, and suffer racial discrimination in the same manner as do other racial minorities.

Except that Indians are the only minority group that the Indian lovers won't let out of the 19th Century. They love Indians as long as they can picture them riding around on ponies wearing their beads and feathers, living in picturesque tee-pee villages and making long profound speeches.

I am frequently invited by elementary school teachers here in Gainesville to come and talk to the children about Indians and "tell them what they are like." Always, without fail, they ask if I can wear my "Indian clothes." By Indian clothes, they mean beads and feathers and Indian jewelry. I explain that as a graduate student at the University of Florida, I have very few occasions to wear Indian clothes. But the children, they say, will be so disappointed if I don't look like a real Indian.

These teachers are asking me to collaborate with them in perpetuating the stereotype of what America wants its Indians to look like. They want us to look like we never moved past 1890. This is almost always the cut-off year for **Real Indians.** As we approach the year 2000, America still won't let Indians into the 20th Century.

This explains why Indians love *Powwow Highway* and non-Indians love *Dances With Wolves*. For those interested in the modern-day realities facing Native Americans, I recommend that you find a video of *Powwow Highway*. Better yet, read the novel by David Seals, *The Powwow Highway*. ❐

Jim West/Impact Visuals

Mohawk Indians surround Canadian Army Check point. They were resisting plans to turn part of their land into a golf course.

Jan Elliott edits Indigenous Thought. *This article is adapted from the June 1991 issue.*

Thanking the Birds

By Joseph Bruchac

One day 30 years ago, Swift Eagle, an Apache man, visited some friends on the Onondaga Indian Reservation in central New York. While he was out walking, he heard sounds of boys playing in the bushes.

"There's another one. Shoot it!" said one of the boys.

When he pushed through the brush to see what was happening, he found that they had been shooting small birds with a BB gun. They had already killed a chickadee, a robin, and several blackbirds. The boys looked up at him, uncertain what he was going to do or say.

There are several things that a non-Indian bird lover might have done: given a stern lecture on the evil of killing birds; threatened to tell the boys' parents on them for doing something they had been told not to do; or even spanked them. Swift Eagle, however, did something else.

"Ah," he said, "I see you have been hunting. Pick up your game and come with me."

He led the boys to a place where they could make a fire and cook the birds. He made sure they said a 'thank you' to the spirits of the birds before eating them, and as they ate he told stories. It was important, he said, to be thankful to the birds for the gifts of their songs, their feathers, and their bodies as food. The last thing he said to them they never forgot — for it was one of those boys who told me this story many years later: "You know, our Creator gave the gift of life to everything that is alive. Life is a very sacred thing. But our Creator knows that we have to eat to stay alive. That is why it is permitted to hunt to feed ourselves and our people. So I understand that you boys must have been very, very hungry to kill those little birds."

Similarities Among Native People

I have always liked that story, for it illustrates several things. Although there was a wide range of customs, lifeways and languages — in pre-Columbian times more than 400 different languages were spoken on the North American continent — many close similarities existed between virtually all of the Native American peoples. Thus ideas held by an Apache from the Southwest fitted into the lives and traditions of Onondagas in the Northeast.

One of these ideas, expressed in Swift Eagle's words to the boys, was the continent-wide belief that mankind depended on the natural world for survival, on the one hand, and had to respect it and remain in right relationship with it, on the other....

As the anecdote about Swift Eagle also shows, the children were taught the values of their cultures through example and stories. Instead of scolding or lecturing them, Swift Eagle showed the boys how to build a fire and cook the game they had shot, giving the songbirds the same respect he would have given a rabbit or deer. He told stories that pointed out the value of those birds as living beings. The ritual activity of making the fire, thanking the spirits of the birds, hearing the stories, and then eating the game they had killed taught the boys more than a hundred stern lectures would have done, and the lesson stayed with them all their lives.❐

The above is excerpted from the afterword to Keepers of the Earth, Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children, *by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Graphic from Aguas Calientes, Ags., Mexico.*

Is not the sky a father and the earth a mother and are not all living things with feet or wings or roots their children?

— Black Elk

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ISSUES

Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving

By Michael Dorris

In preparing this essay on stereotyping and Native American children, I did not concern myself with overt or intentional racism. Native American young people, particularly in certain geographical areas, are often prey to racial epithets and slurs — and to physical abuse — just by being who they are. No amount of "consciousness-raising" will solve this problem; it must be put down with force and determination.

Native Americans have more than one thing *not* to be thankful about on Thanksgiving. Pilgrim Day, and its antecedent feast Halloween, represent the annual twin peaks of Indian stereotyping. From early October through the end of November, "cute little Indians" abound on greeting cards, advertising posters, in costumes and school projects. Like stock characters from a vaudeville repertoire, they dutifully march out of the folk-cultural attic (and right down Madison Avenue!) *ugh*ing and *wah-wah-wah*ing, smeared with lipstick and rouged; decked out in an assortment of "Indian suits" composed of everything from old clothes to fringed paper bags, little trick-or-treaters and school pageant extras mindlessly sport and cavort.

Considering that virtually none of the standard fare surrounding either Halloween or Thanksgiving contains an ounce of authenticity, historical accuracy, or cross-cultural perception, why is it so apparently ingrained? Is it necessary to the American psyche to perpetually exploit and debase its victims in order to justify its history? And do Native Americans have to reconcile themselves to forever putting up with such exhibitions of puerile ethnocentrism?

Being a parent is never uncomplicated. One is compelled, through one's children, to re-experience vicariously the unfolding complexities of growing up, of coping with the uncomprehended expectations of an apparently intransigent and unaffectable world, of carving a niche of personality and point of view amidst the abundance of pressures and demands which seem to explode from all directions. Most people spend a good part of their lives in search of the ephemeral ideal often termed "identity," but never is the quest more arduous and more precarious — and more crucial — than in the so-called "formative years."

One would like, of course, to spare offspring some of the pains and frustrations necessarily involved in maturation and self-realization, without depriving them of the fulfillments, discoveries, and excitements which are also part of the process. In many arenas, little or no parental control is — or should be — possible. Learning, particularly about self, is a struggle, but with security, support and love it has extraordinary and marvelously unique possibilities. As parents, our lot is often to watch and worry and cheer and commiserate, curbing throughout our impulse to intervene. The world of children interacting with children is in large part off-limits.

Passivity ends, however, with relation to those adult-manufactured and therefore wholly gratuitous problems with which our children are often confronted. We naturally rise against the greed of panderers of debilitating junk foods; we reject dangerous toys, however cleverly advertised; and we make strict laws to protect against reckless motorists. We dutifully strap our children into seatbelts, keep toxic substances out of reach, and keep a wary eye for the molesting or abusive stranger.

With so many blatant dangers to counter, perhaps it is unavoidable that some of the more subtle and insidious perils to child welfare are often permitted to pass. The deficiencies of our own attitudes and training may be allowed to shower upon our children, thus insuring their continuation, unchallenged, into yet another generation. Much of what we impart is unconscious, and we can only strive to heighten our own awareness and thereby circumvent a repetition *ad infinitum* of the "sins of the fathers" (and mothers).

And of course, we all make the effort to do this, to one degree or another. It is therefore especially intolerable when we observe other adults witlessly, maliciously, and occasionally innocently, burdening our children with their own unexamined mental junk. Each of us has undoubtedly amassed a whole repertoire of examples of such negative influences, ranked in hierarchy of infamy according to our own values and perspectives. Even with the inauguration of certain broad controls, Saturday morning cartoon audiences are still too often invited to witness and approve violence, cruelty, racism, sexism, ageism, and a plethora of other endemic social vices.

Attitudes pertinent to "racial" or "sex-role" identity are among the most potentially hazardous, for these can easily be internalized — particularly by the "minority" child. Such internalized attitudes profoundly affect self-concept, behavior, aspiration, and confidence. They can inhibit a child before he or she has learned to define personal talents, limits, or objectives, and tend to regularly become self-fulfilling prophesies. Young people who are informed that they are going to be under-achievers do underachieve with painful regularity.

The progeny of each oppressed group are saddled with their own specialized set of debilitating — and to parents, infuriating — stereotypes. As the father of three Native American children, aged ten, six and three, I am particularly attuned (but not resigned) to that huge store of folk Americana presuming to have to do with "Indian lore." From the "One little, two little..." messages of

nursery school, to the ersatz pageantry of boy scout/campfire girl mumbo jumbo, precious, ridiculous and irritating "Indians" are forever popping up.

Consider for a moment the underlying meanings of some of the supposedly innocuous linguistic stand-bys: "Indian givers" take back what they have sneakily bestowed in much the same way that "Indian summer" deceives the gullible flower bud. Unruly children are termed "wild Indians" and a local bank is named "Indian Head (would *you* open an account at a "Jew's hand," "Negro ear" or "Italian toe" branch?). Ordinary citizens rarely walk "Indian file" when about their business, yet countless athletic teams, when seeking emblems of savagery and bloodthirstiness, see fit to title themselves "warriors," "braves," "redskins," and the like.

On another level, children wearing "Indian suits," playing "cowboys and Indians" (or, in the case of organizations like the Y-Indian Guides, Y-Indian Maidens and Y-Indian Princesses, simply "Indians"), or scratching their fingers with pocket knives (the better to cement a friendship) are encouraged to shriek, ululate, speak in staccato and ungrammatical utterances (or, conversely, in sickeningly flowery metaphor) — thus presumably emulating "Indians." With depressing predictability, my children have been variously invited to "dress up and dance," portray Squanto (Pocahontas is waiting in the wings: my daughter is only three), and "tell a myth."

Not surprisingly, they have at times evidenced some unwillingness to identify, and thus cast their lot, with the "Indians" which bombard them on every front. My younger son has lately taken to commenting "Look at the Indians!" when he comes across Ricardo Montalban, Jeff Chandler or the improbable Joey Bishop in a vintage TV western. Society is teaching him that "Indians" exist only in an ethnographic frieze, decorative and slightly titillatingly menacing. They invariably wear feathers, never crack a smile (though an occasional leer is permissible under certain conditions), and think about little besides the good old days. Quite naturally, it does not occur to my son that he and these curious and exotic creatures are expected to present a common front — until one of his first grade classmates, garbed in the favorite costume of Halloween (ah, the permutations of burlap!) or smarting from an ecology commercial, asks him how to shoot a bow, skin a hamster, or endure a scrape without a tear. The society image is at the same time too demanding and too limiting a model.

Protecting children from racism is every bit as important as insuring that they avoid playing with electrical sockets.

As a parent, what does one do? All efficacy is lost if one is perceived and categorized by school officials as a hyper-sensitive crank, reacting with horror to every "I-is-for-Indian" picture book. To be effective, one must appear to be super-reasonable, drawing sympathetic teachers and vice-principals into an alliance of the enlightened to beat back the attacks of the flat-earthers. In such a pose, one may find oneself engaged in an apparently persuasive discussion with a school librarian regarding a book titled something like *Vicious Red Men of the Plains* (Why, it's set here for 20 years and nobody ever noticed that it portrayed all Indi...uh, Native Americans, as homicidal maniacs!"), while at the same time observing in silence a poster on the wall about "Contributions of the Indians" (heavy on corn and canoes, short on astronomy and medicine).

Priorities must be set. One might elect to let the infrequent coloring book page pass uncontested in favor of mounting the battlements against the visitation of a traveling Indianophile group proposing a "playlet" on "Indians of New Hampshire." These possibly well-intentioned theatricals, routinely headed by someone called "Princess Snowflake" or "Chief Bob," are among the more objectionable "learning aids" and should be avoided at all costs. It must somehow be communicated to educators that *no* information about native peoples is truly preferable to a reiteration of the same old stereotypes, particularly in the early grades.

A year ago my older son brought home a program printed by his school; on the second page was an illustration of the "First Thanksgiving," with a caption which read in part: "They served pumpkins and turkeys and corn and squash. The Indians had never seen such a feast!" On the contrary! The *Pilgrims* had literally never seen "such a feast," since all foods mentioned are exclusively indigenous to the Americas and had been provided, or so legend has it, *by* the local tribe.

Thanksgiving could be a time for appreciating Native American peoples as they were and as they are, not as either the Pilgrims or their descendant bureaucrats might wish them to be. If there *was* really a Plymouth Thanksgiving dinner, with Native Americans in attendance as either guests or hosts, then the event was rare indeed. Pilgrims generally considered Indians to be devils in disguise, and treated them as such.

And if those hypothetical Indians participating in that hypothetical feast thought that all was well and were thankful in the expectation of a peaceful future, they were sadly mistaken. In the ensuing months and years, they would die from European diseases, suffer the theft of their lands and property and the near-eradication of their religion and their language, and be driven to the brink of extinction. Thanksgiving, like much of American history, is complex, multi-faceted, and will not bear too close a scrutiny without revealing a less than heroic aspect. Knowing the truth about Thanksgiving, both its proud and its shameful motivations and history, might well benefit contemporary children. But the glib retelling of an ethnocentric and self-serving falsehood does not do one any good.

Parents' major responsibility, of course, resides in the home. From the earliest possible age, children must be made aware that many people are wrong-headed about not only Native Americans, but about cultural pluralism in general. Children must be encouraged to articulate any questions they might have about "other" people, and "minority" children must be given ways in which to insulate themselves from real or implied insults, epithets, slights, or stereotypes. "Survival humor" must be developed and positive models must, consciously and unconsciously, be available and obvious. Sadly, children must learn *not* to trust uncritically.

Protecting children from racism is every bit as important as insuring that they avoid playing with electrical sockets. Poison is poison, and ingrained oppressive cultural attitudes are at least as hard to antidote, once implanted, as are imbibed cleaning fluids. No one gains by allowing an inequitable and discriminatory status quo to persist. It's worth being a pain in the neck about. ❐

Reprinted with the author's permission. Michael Dorris is author of The Broken Cord, *the novel* Yellow Raft in Blue Water, *and co-author of* The Crown of Columbus. *This essay originally appeared in the* Bulletin *of the C.I.B.C., Vol. 9, #7.*

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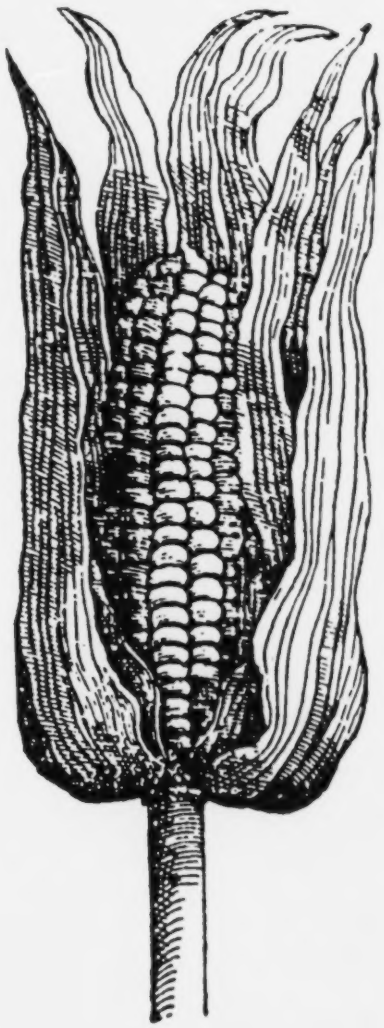
Nicely, Nicely

Nicely, nicely, nicely, away in the east,
the rain clouds care
for the little corn plants
as a mother cares for her baby.

Zuni Corn Ceremony



Indian Children Speak

By Juanita Bell

People said, "Indian children are hard to teach.
Don't expect them to talk."
One day stubby little Boy said,
"Last night the moon went with me all the way
When I went out to walk."
People said, "Indian children are very silent.
Their only words are no and yes."
But ragged Pansy confided softly,
"My dress is old but at night the moon is kind;
Then I wear a beautiful moon-colored dress."
People said, "Indian children are dumb.
They seldom make a reply."
Clearly I hear Dolores answer,
"Yes, the sunset is so good, I think God is throwing
A bright shawl around the shoulders of sky."
People said, "Indian children are rude.
They don't seem very bright."
Then I remember Joe Henry's remark.
"The tree is hanging down her head because the sun
is staring at her. White people always stare.
They do not know it is not polite."
People said, "Indian children never take you in,
Outside their thoughts you'll always stand."
I have forgotten the idle words that People said,
But treasure the day when iron doors swung wide,
and I slipped into the heart of Indian land.

Native Americans: What Not to Teach

By June Sark Heinrich

Don't use alphabet cards that say A is for apple, B is for ball, and I is for Indian.

The matter may *seem* to be a trivial one, but if you want your students to develop respect for Native Americans, don't start them out in kindergarten equating Indians with *things* like apples and balls. Other short "i" words (ice, ink or ivory) could be used, so stay away from I-is-for-Indian in your alphabet teaching.

Don't talk about Indians as though they belong to the past.

Books and filmstrips often have titles like "How the Indians Lived," as though there aren't any living today. The fact is that about 1.8 million Native Americans live in what is now the United States, many on reservations and many in cities and towns. They are in all kinds of neighborhoods and schools and are in all walks of life. Too many Native Americans live in conditions of poverty and powerlessness, but they are very much a part of the modern world. If the people who write books and filmstrips mean "How (particular groups of) Native Americans Lived Long Ago," then they should say so.

Don't talk about "them" and "us."

A "them" and "us" approach reflects extreme insensitivity, as well as a misconception of historical facts. "They" are more truly "us" than anyone else. Native peoples are the original Americans and are the only indigenous Americans in the sense that all of their ancestors were born on this land. Everybody else in this country came from some other place originally.

Don't lump all Native Americans together.

There were no "Indians" before the Europeans came to America — that is, no people called themselves "Indians." They are Navajo or Seminole or Menominee, etc. The hundreds of native groups scattered throughout the U.S. are separate peoples, separate nations. They have separate languages and cultures and names. Native Americans of one nation were and are as different from Native Americans of another nation as Italians are from Swedes, Hungarians from the Irish or the English from the Spanish. When referring to and teaching about Native Americans, use the word "Indians" — or even "Native American" — as little as possible. Don't "study the Indians." Study the Hopi, the Sioux, the Nisqually or the Apache.

Don't expect Native Americans to look like Hollywood movie "Indians."

Some Native Americans tell a story about a white "American" woman who visited a reservation. She stopped and stared at a young man, then said to him, "Are you a *real* Indian? You don't look Indian."

Whatever it is that people expect Native Americans to look like, many do not fit those images. Since they come from different nations, their physical features, body structure and skin colors vary a great deal — and none has red skin. Of course, Native and non-Native Americans have intermarried so that many Native Americans today have European, African or other ancestry. Therefore, don't expect all Native Americans to look alike, any more than all Europeans look alike.

Don't let TV stereotypes go unchallenged.

Unfortunately for both Native and non-Native American children, TV programs still show the savage warrior or occasionally the noble savage stereotypes. Discuss with children the TV programs they watch. Help them understand the meaning of the word "stereotype." Help them understand that, from the Native American point of view, Columbus and other Europeans who came to this land were invaders. Even so, Native Americans originally welcomed and helped the European settlers. When they fought, they were no more "savage" than the Europeans and were often less so. Help children understand that atrocities are a part of *any* war. In fact, war itself is atrocious. At least, the Native Americans were defending land they had lived on for thousands of years. If Native Americans were not "savage warriors," neither were they "noble savages." They were no more nor less noble than the rest of humanity.

Another common stereotype is the portrayal of the "Indian" as a person of few words, mostly "ugh." The fact is that early European settlers were aware of and commented specifically on the brilliance of Native American oratory and the beauty of their languages.

Stereotypes are sneaky. They influence the way we talk and live and play, sometimes without our knowing it. Don't say to your students, "You act like a bunch of wild Indians." Don't encourage or even allow children to play "cowboys and Indians." Be sensitive to stereotypes in everything you say and do.

Don't assume that Native American children are well acquainted with their heritage.

If you have Native American children in your class, you may expect that they will be good resource persons for your "unit on Indians." Today, it is not unlikely that such children will be proud of being Native American. Some may participate in traditional activities of their cultures. In general, however, native children have much in common with other children in the U.S. in that they know far more about TV programs than about their own national ways of life. They eat junk food and want all of the things most children in our society want. If lost in a forest, they would not necessarily be able to manage any better than other children would. Like other children in the U.S. native children need to be taught about the native heritage which, in a very real sense, is the heritage of everybody living in the U.S. today.

Don't let students think that native ways of life have no meaning today.

Native arts have long commanded worldwide interest and admiration. But far more important for human and ecological survival are Native American philosophies of life. Respect for the land; love of every form of life, human and non-human; harmony between humans and nature rather than conquest and destruction of nature — these are vital characteristics of native ways of life. All people in the U.S. can and must learn to live in harmony with the natural world and with one another. That is one lesson native peoples can teach your students about "the Indians." ❐

June Sark Heinrich formerly directed the Native American Committee's Indian School in Chicago.

Reprinted from Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes, *Council on Interracial Books for Children.*

Columbus and Native Issues in the Elementary Classroom

By Bob Peterson

Many of us grew up with the seemingly innocent refrain, "In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." Throughout our schooling, our understanding of Columbus didn't move much beyond this simple rhyme.

Our children still learn myths and lies about Columbus. However, they face not only inaccurate social studies textbooks and children's biographies, but a plethora of new products from businesses that seek to profit off the Columbus Quincentennial. General Mills, for example, told kids on their recent Honey Nut Cheerios box that Columbus "discovered the New World" and "celebrated with a breakfast including Honey Nut Cheerios."

As October 1992 approaches, we should brace ourselves for a pro-Columbus media barrage complete with new books, toys, medallions, and video games.

Credit: Tom Bosnell

Problems and Possibilities

This poses problems and possibilities for early childhood and elementary teachers. We have some choices.

First, we could go along with the "official" story and use readily available, slick materials and existing children's books on Columbus. Some new teaching materials make a token attempt at answering criticisms of Columbus and the European conquest of the Western Hemisphere. Columbus, for example, doesn't "discover the new world," he "encounters" it. But these materials rarely examine what Columbus actually did in the Americas and its devastating impact. If we follow the official story, even in its more liberal form, we would perpetuate myths and lies.

Second, we might ignore the quincentenary, arguing that elementary school curriculum is already too focused on holiday celebrations.

Or third, we could view the quincentenary as an opportunity to break down myths about Columbus and stereotypes about Indians. We could encourage students to critically examine children's books and television. We could teach that native peoples are part of today's multicultural society. We could show how mistreatment of native peoples is not just a question of the past, but continues today. We could stress that people continue to work for native peoples' rights.

Because most of us were educated with the Columbus myth as well, we must re-educate ourselves by reading books such as Hans Koning's *Columbus, His Enterprise* and Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. We need to also learn about the varied histories of the many native nations that existed and continue to exist in the Americas. We should sensitize ourselves to the impact of racism on our own education and on our society.

I have found that *Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes* (film strip and written materials) by the Council on Interracial Books for Children in New York City is extremely effective in changing attitudes of both educators and students. It is narrated by native children who visit a public library and become outraged at the stereotypes of native peoples in children's books.

How we approach issues such as Columbus and stereotypes depends on children's developmental levels. For a four or five year

old, "history" is yesterday and the "future" is tomorrow. A fifth grader, on the other hand, might be a history whiz. Even the youngest children, however, should begin to experiment with words such as "fair," "unfair," and "stereotype" just as we try to teach them the meaning of "respect" and "cooperate."

One way to start studying Columbus and Native Americans is to assess your students' perceptions of Native American people. Depending on your students' ages and the composition of your class, you might ask them to draw an "Indian" and a house he or she lives in, to write down what they know about Native Americans, or as a class make a theme map or "word web" together to brainstorm what children associate with the topic. (If native children are part of your classroom it is important to talk with them before this activity so they understand its purpose.) Ask students to tell the class what identifies the person as an "Indian" in their drawings. Write the responses on the board.

Many times the responses will be based on stereotypes: the teepee and feather are most common, followed by bows and arrows and the tomahawk.

The pictures and stories will not only help teachers understand the children's stereotypes, but can be the basis for discussion. Ask the students where they got their ideas for what they drew or wrote. Ask if they think the pictures or drawings are accurate. It's necessary to point out that some native people did use teepees and that feathers played an important role among many Native Americans, but when we generalize we are stereotyping. Repeating this activity at the end of your study is a useful way to assess the impact your curriculum has had on children.

An Anti-Stereotype Curriculum

Once the stereotypes are out in the open it's crucial they be dealt with. Based on your analysis, you might work with your colleagues to build an "anti-stereotype curriculum." Some of the following ideas might be helpful. The ideas are based on suggestions in *Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes* by the CIBC; *Books Without Bias: Through Indian Eyes*, edited by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale; and *Anti-Bias Curriculum, Tools for Empowering Young Children*, by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Show the film strip *Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes* and discuss it with your students. For younger children, show it in 3 or 4 parts and discuss each separately.
- Ask students if they know any "Indian" person and what that person is like.
- Explain the word "stereotype" as a mistaken idea about how a whole group of people think, behave, or dress. Give an example that does not relate to American Indians, such as the view by some that girls can't be good baseball players, or boys can't cook.
- Concretely explain some stereotypes, and try to make analogies with children's own experiences. For example, explain that some native nations used feathers for ceremonial purposes, but that many others did not. Ask the children how their family dresses for special occasions and ceremonies, such as weddings. Point out that it's a stereotype to think that all people of their ethnic background always dress as if they were at a wedding. Likewise, it's a stereotype to think that all Indians dress with feathers all the time.
- As part of a class discussion, list common stereotypes about Native Americans. Have children identify the stereotypes as they are used in Thanksgiving greeting cards, alphabet and counting books, history books, or children's books on Columbus (see chart).

Explain how stereotypes are used to make Indians seem inferior or less than human.

- Explain how these stereotypes are used to make Indians seem inferior or less than human. Don't limit your critiques to textbooks. Some of the most common stereotypes are in children's favorites such as *Clifford's Halloween* by Norman Bridwell in which Clifford uses a feather head dress to dress up as an Indian; or Maurice Sendak's *Alligators All Around*, in which the alligators are "imitating Indians" by wearing feather head-dresses, carrying tomahawks, and smoking pipes. Also look at stereotypes in society at large, such as in the names of sports teams or cars. Talk about the Washington Redskins, or the Cherokee Jeep, or Winnebago Trailer. Ask if the children know any other cars or sports teams named after nationality groups.
- Use the article (p. 67) on people fighting against "mascoting" as a discussion starter on what people can do to fight stereotypes.
- In books that children bring to c whether from home or library, consiste point out and discuss any stereotypes. A model such thinking and give children opportunity to think on their own — " you notice any stereotypes in that story?' children will improve their ability to th critically.
- Videotape a Columbus or Thanksgiv special from TV. Watch it with your stude and critique it together.
- Have students make posters about co mon stereotypes of various groups of peop Have the children explain how the sterc types hurt people. I have found that as ch dren start learning about stereotypes, th often generalize and think everything is stereotype: that all pictures of native peop in traditional dress or any picture of a woma as a nurse are stereotypes. One way to de with this is to get children to teach othe about stereotypes — by explaining the posters, doing short presentations or skits.
- Use quality books, such as Michae Dorris's photographic book, *Native Ameri cans: 500 Years After*, to show how contem porary native people live and look.
- Invite Native American adults into you classroom to talk about their jobs and family and how they feel about the quincentenary.
- Have children think about a time in their lives when they fought against something that wasn't fair. Explain how native peoples have fought for what is "fair" — their land and way of life.

Taking Action

As children become aware of how unfair stereotypes are, teachers might encourage them to not just complain about them, but to take action. Educating others, writing to publishers and stores, and talking to librarians are all possibilities.

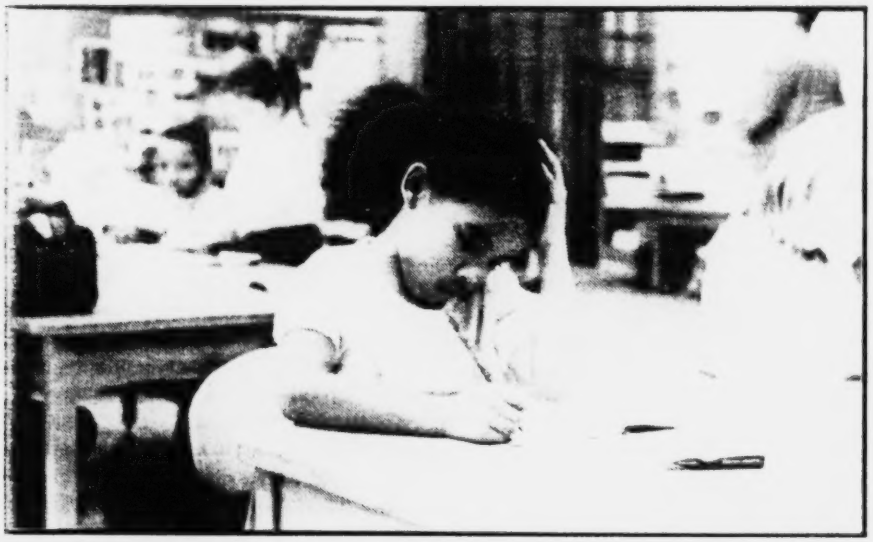
One time after viewing the filmstrip *Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes* my 5th grade students seemed particularly angered at what they had learned. The next day they talked about how their siblings in first grade had come home with construction paper headdresses with feathers.

"That's a stereotype!" the students proudly proclaimed.

"What did you do about it?" I asked.

"I ripped it up." "I slugged him," came the chorus of responses. Cringing and making a mental note to strengthen my conflict resolution curriculum, I initiated a discussion. "What else might you have done with your brother?"

"Why do your brothers and sisters have feather headdresses and how do we learn



such things?"

Finally they decided there were more productive things they could do. They first scoured the school library for books with stereotypes. Since they didn't find many, they decided to investigate their siblings' first grade room. They wrote a letter to the teacher asking permission, and then went in armed with clipboards, paper, and pens. Results were a picture of an Indian next to the letter "I" in the alphabet strip on the wall. They came back and decided they wanted to teach the first graders about stereotypes. I was skeptical, but agreed and after much rehearsal they entered the first grade classroom to give their lesson. Later they reflected on it and two students wrote in our school newspaper:

We have been studying stereotypes of Native Americans. What is a stereotype? It's when somebody says something that's not true about another group of people. For example, it is a stereotype if you think all Indians wear feathers or say "HOW!" Or if you think that all girls are delicate. Why? Because some girls are strong.

Stereotype Checklist

The book *Through Indian Eyes*, edited by Slapin and Seale, has a checklist to evaluate children's books. The checklist examines both blatant stereotypes and more subtle biases. Some of the many questions raised:

- In ABC books, is "E" for Eskimo or "I" for Indian? In picture books are children shown "playing Indian?"
- Are native people shown as savages or primitive people rather than as human beings who are members of highly complex societies?
- Are native people always shown the same, without regard for the cultural, religious, and language differences among tribes?
- Are native people described with racist imagery, such as "half-naked," "brutal," or "bloodthirsty"? Do the native people speak in short, inarticulate sentences such as "Me go. Soldier make fire. We now hide."
- Is native culture depicted in a condescending way in which, for example, religious beliefs are "superstitions"? Is there a paternalistic distinction between "them" and "us"?

One year after my 4th graders looked for stereotypes and studied Native American history, a student wrote: *In Room 25 we have been studying Native Americans. Indians are human beings like everyone else. They are not animals, they are human beings. Not all Indians dress alike. Not all Indians dance the same way. All Indians don't live in teepees. Indians wear feathers on their heads only for special ceremonies. The Indians are very sad that many of the white settlers took their land and killed some of their relatives. Now some of them live on reservations and some in our city.*

To find out what your students know about Columbus, have them draw or write what they have learned in previous grades. Based on what they know, different follow-up activities might be useful.

Even for very young children, teachers can talk about concepts such as fairness, discovery, and culture. Through role play and discussion, children can recognize that if someone was living in their house and some one else came up and "discovered" it, it wouldn't be fair for the new person to kick the current resident out. A similar role play about Columbus or Thanksgiving can dispel the myth of the "discovery of the new world."

The "discovered" purse exercise — where a teacher "discovers" and claims a student's purse or backpack — is a great way to start a discussion. (This exercise is further explained in Bill Bigelow's article, p. 6)

After such role plays, a good next step is reading or talking about accurate accounts of Columbus. Do the children know, for example, that few of the native children who witnessed Columbus's arrival in the Americas, ever grew to adulthood? Or that Columbus and the Spaniards purposefully used attack dogs against native peoples, not to mention more gruesome tactics such as cutting off hands and burning native people alive? That Columbus initiated the slave trade in the Western Hemisphere when he sent hundreds of native people back to Spain on his second voyage, to be sold as slaves?

As children become familiar with the true story of Columbus, they will certainly ask questions such as, "Why do some books not tell the truth?" "Why was I told something else at home or last year in school?" "My mom says Columbus was a brave man, and a hero."

Good Questions

These are good questions without easy answers. I have found that only by integrating such questions throughout my entire curriculum, do children begin to realize that the content of TV and textbooks is very often shaped to serve interests of those who run society. In studying the American Revolution, for example, children should learn that only a handful of rich, white, male property owners elected our first president. Why are most children's textbooks silent on that issue? What has been the history of social movements in this country to change that?

Over time my 4th and 5th graders develop the ability to question the validity of what they read. I can help in that process by asking such questions as, "How do you think Native Americans [or other "silenced" people] feel when they hear such lies?" "Can we find other examples in our books that might present distortions or stereotypes about other people?" "Why do book companies print such things?" "Do you think your mom and dad, or maybe other teachers, might not have been told the whole story either?" "Who wins and who loses when these things about native peoples are printed in books?" "How can you tell if what we read or hear is true?"

Children might take such questions and interview people in their family and community. They could also ask "What do you think

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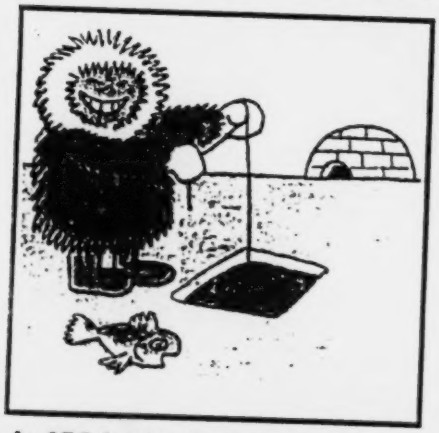
about Christopher Columbus?" The responses could then be charted and discussed in class or small groups.

As children gain a new understanding of Columbus and the damaging effects of stereotypes, they often want to do something about it. Encourage them to make their own stories, dramas, murals, videos, drawings, about Columbus and native peoples.

One year my students created a drama for a school program on Columbus Day that had a space invader "discover" the entire planet earth and claim it for his own. First I gave the children a cartoon drawing of Columbus's landfall with Taíno people looking on. I asked them to write what both groups might have been thinking. I asked them to either write a skit about the interaction between Columbus and the Taíno, or about why some native people don't like to celebrate Columbus Day. As a class we combined the ideas from the small groups and came up with a play that had some children explaining to their classmates why they weren't going to celebrate the holiday. They used the space invader analogy as a way to explain the issue to the audience. It ended with the aliens taking slaves back to their own galaxy and "settling" our planet.

Children can also illustrate their own books about the true story of Columbus, either using the story written by Tina Thomas on page 32, or using a story they wrote based on their new understanding about Columbus.

Students could also survey books in the school library or younger children's textbooks and find out which books include or omit important facts. They could write additions or notes of caution for those books and ask the librarian to put them with the biased books. They could carry the project one step further and write the publishers of the books,



In ABC books, is "E" for "Eskimo?" From Reed & Oswald, My Little Golden Dictionary.

explaining their criticisms. A class of fourth graders in Milwaukee wrote to their U.S. Senator asking why he voted in favor of spending money on the quincentennial. He wrote back and enclosed seven xeroxed pages of the *World Book Encyclopedia* on Columbus. The children responded, "We know what the encyclopedia and other children's books say about him [Columbus]. We do not think that everything written about him is true. There are other places to look for information....We still think our government shouldn't spend money celebrating Columbus Day."

It is also important to link the myths surrounding Columbus to other myths of U.S. history. In particular, it is essential to expose the truth about the colonization of the Americas — its effect on the native populations and how it led to the enslavement of millions of people from Africa. By critically evaluating U.S. history as presented in most social studies books, we can help children learn to think critically and independently.

Important Reminders

In discussing such issues, two points are especially important. First, both the Native Americans and Africans fought valiantly, sometimes successfully, for their own freedom. One of the most moving examples in U.S. history involves the Seminole Wars in Florida in the early to mid 1800s, in which Seminole Indians united with runaway and free African-Americans to fight the U.S. army.

Henrietta Buckmaster's book, *The Seminole Wars*, is a good source of information for children. Written at a 5th grade reading level, selections of the book can be read to a whole class or by children in groups. The story of cooperation between Native American and Africans who freed themselves lends itself to provocative role plays and discussions about the need for multiracial unity then and today.

Second, not all Europeans supported the barbarous acts against people of color. Even in Columbus's era, there were forceful critics of the mistreatment of native peoples, such as Bartolomé de las Casas. And while the Founding Fathers of the United States were writing a constitution that made slavery legal, Thomas Paine eloquently wrote against such a view.

Most important, children must understand that when we discuss Native Americans, it is not only history. Native peoples have survived despite the European conquest, and live and work in all strata of society. They continue their cultural traditions, and still seek the justice they have been so long denied.

In this regard, a unit on Columbus for elementary aged children should be in the context of a broader study of Native Americans, including contemporary native issues such as protecting treaty rights, protecting lands from mining companies, and ending all forms of discrimination.

This stress on contemporary questions is especially important with four or five year-old children. Educator, Louise Derman-Sparks, author of *Anti-Bias Curriculum, Tools for Empowering Young Children*, cautions that unless teachers are teaching Native American young children, "it is not effective to introduce activities about past Native American life. After all, children do not study the life-style of colonial Euro-Americans in preschool or in kindergarten (except for the very simplistic stereotypes of the 'Pilgrim.')"

By using various books, maps, and pictures, teachers should help children understand that there are hundreds of different nations of native peoples in the Americas

Helping Young Children Critique Columbus Books

As part of an "anti-stereotype curriculum," it is useful to have children break into groups and examine books on Columbus. The following questions can be written as a chart and can help children recognize the subtle ways in which books present stereotypes and distorted information.

1. How many times did Columbus talk?
2. How many times did we get to know what he was thinking?
3. How many times did the Native people have names?
4. How many times did the Native people talk?
5. How many times did we get to know what the Native people were thinking?
6. What do you learn about Columbus's life?
7. What did you learn about Native people's lives?
8. Does the book describe the Native people's feelings?
9. Does the book describe how Columbus treated the Native people?

Credit: Andrew Lichtenstein, Impact Visuals

Chippewa Nick Hockings, a Wisconsin treaty rights activist, prepares for a night of spear fishing.

who speak different languages and have different cultures. One way of doing this is to refer to a particular people or nation by name (e.g. Cherokee, Hopi, etc.)

While teachers of very young children should stress contemporary Native Americans and how to overcome stereotypes, teachers of older students can gradually introduce other topics. Depending on the level of your class and the previous work your school has done, children can begin to examine the contributions Native Americans brought to the world in the area of food, clothing, transportation, agriculture, and democratic social organization. Jack Weatherford's *Indian Givers* is an excellent teacher resource.

It is essential to introduce political concepts such as the importance of treaty rights. Children should learn that tribes are independent governments with a special relationship to the federal government. They should learn of the hundreds of treaties that the U.S. government signed with native peoples and then broke. They should be familiar with native struggles to save their land and protect their resources. They should learn of indigenous views toward the environment, and respect for Mother Earth.

For example, in 1855 Northwest Indians were given the rights to fish "as long as the sun shined" and yet in recent years they have had to struggle to protect their fishing rights. As part of the 4th grade state social studies curriculum, students could examine how native peoples were pushed out of their state, investigating what treaties were signed and if they've been broken.

To deal with contemporary issues, children may want to write some of the organizations listed in the resource guide on page 85, visit local or state historical societies, or invite local Native Americans to speak at school.

While information on political struggles is hard to come by, there is a growing body of Native American folk tales and poetry for young children. One of the best collections, which also suggests dozens of related activities for the elementary school curriculum is *Keepers of the Earth, Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*, by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac.

As teachers build an anti-stereotype curriculum, it is important to include parents. The curriculum can be an important way to help educate parents, and to encourage parental involvement in the classroom. Parents, in turn, often have important perspectives to offer and can suggest how to carry an anti-stereotype approach into the home.

Derman-Sparks' *Anti-Bias Curriculum, Tools for Empowering Young Children*, has some excellent suggestions on how to prepare parents for alternative views of Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. Teachers should also use Halloween as a way to educate around stereotypes, explaining to parents why dressing up like an "Indian" perpetuates stereotypes and is insulting to native people.

The best way to approach the Columbus Quincentennial is to use it as a catalyst for change. Perhaps it will help us reexamine approaches to teaching not only about Native Americans and Columbus, but about other oppressed and "silenced" people as well. And as children awaken to the true and rich history of the Americas, we can help them become more inquisitive and responsible for their future in the Americas. ❐

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Native Land Rights: A Role Play

By Jane Califf

"What do you know about Indian people?" I asked a class of first-graders.

"They kill people."

"They tie people to a stake and burn them."

"They chase people from their homes."

I was shocked. Somehow I thought that six-year-olds are too young to have internalized such stereotypes, but I had underestimated the power of TV, books and comics. Most assuredly, the children's responses did not fit into my lesson plan. I had come to class prepared to talk about the everyday life of the Lenni Lenape, who had once lived in the part of New Jersey where I was then teaching.

I thought that if my students could appreciate aspects of Lenni Lenape life, I would be helping them to understand and respect Native Americans. However, I realized that this would not be enough to counteract the false impressions the children in my class had of Native Americans as "savages" and "killers." I would try again.

I invited a Native American parent to visit the class and help me put on a skit to demonstrate why Native Americans fought the white settlers. I introduced the parent as a member of the Penobscot Indian Nation. An excited murmur echoed through the room at the thought of seeing a "real live Indian."

Setting the stage for the skit, I told the children that our guest would pretend to be a Lenni Lenape and that he and I were about to put on a play about the Native Americans who were the first people to live in and around Planfield, New Jersey, where the school was situated. I described how different the area looked then. I took the role of the people from across the ocean who, because they were poor, unemployed and landless, were coming to find a better life for themselves. I told the class to pretend that the hall was the ocean and the classroom was where the settlers landed.

I went out into the hall after explaining that when I reappeared, it meant I had just completed a long ocean voyage and would need a place to live.

When I entered the classroom I asked, "Who's that?" pointing to the Native American parent. "An Indian!" "Well, I'm going to see if he will give me some land." I explained my need in pantomime since we didn't know each other's language, and he graciously let me use one-fourth of the room. Meanwhile, he showed me what animals to hunt, how to hunt, what vegetables to eat and how to plant them.

Another boat came; the act was repeated. Several times this happened until my collaborator was standing in a corner of the classroom with one square foot of space left.

I said, "I think I hear something again." "Not another boat!" several children exclaimed and ran to the door to check. "Yes, there's another boat!" they said, thoroughly caught up in the drama.

"Come on over," I called, and 50 more phantom settlers entered the room. I asked the class, "Should the Lenni Lenape give up his space in the corner for these new people?" "No," one boy said seriously, "because then he would be in the closet." The class laughed. A girl jumped up. "If he has to give up that little piece of land, then he won't have any land at all, and that's no laughing matter."

"Let's take sides then," I suggested. "Some of you be Lenni Lenape people, and some of you be settlers with me. We'll have to discuss this problem." They chose sides. A "settler" on my side began: "We're going to take all your land." "No, you're not!" said a young "Lenni Lenape," stamping her foot.

Suddenly and spontaneously a "war" broke out. Children pushed, shoved, leapt over desks and ran around the room defending their side in a mock battle. They became so caught up in the action that we were able to bring the drama to a close only with some difficulty.

"What happened?" we then asked. "There was a fight!" "Why?" "Because they were going to take all of the Lenni Lenape's land, and that wasn't fair."

We then summarized the point of the skit, suggesting that the next time they watched a TV show in which Native American people were fighting settlers, they would understand a little better why. It was not that Native Americans like to kill people, but that despite their hospitality to the newcomers, their land and homes were being taken away and they had to fight back. I did not pursue this any further except to say that most of the Native Americans' land was eventually taken from them by force. Native Americans fought back but lost, I told my class, and now there are only a few places left that they can call their own.

I could have added, but did not, that denial of Native American rights to land that they claim by treaty continues to this day. The occupation of Wounded Knee occurred about this time, and TV news programs were filled with the latest events in the battle between U.S. troops and descendants of the Sioux people, many of whom had been massacred in that same location 80 years before. But since I thought it would be too difficult to explain what was happening to six-year-olds, I never discussed it with them.

A month later, a substitute teacher took the class and the subject of Native Americans came up. In describing our classroom drama, one child shouted, "And then he was standing over there in the corner!"; the teacher asked, "And what was that called?" Answered one child: "Bandaged Knee."

I learned much from this incident. This child had made a connection between contemporary events on the TV screen and the drama that had unfolded in our classroom four weeks earlier. Yet, I had not helped the children make the connection, having underestimated their capacities — a common failing among teachers.

With older children, I have varied the drama. Usually a simple confrontation between Native Americans and settlers, in which each side presents its views, is enough to make clear the legitimate anger of Native Americans over the theft of their land. One second grader thought an Indian was "a person who stands on a rock and when a cowboy walks by he goes POW on his head with a tomahawk." "Why?" I asked. "I don't know," he replied. In the role-playing situation I chose him to be a Native American defending his people's right to their land. He put up a good defense, and it was clear his attitude was changed as a result of the role-play....

The apparent effectiveness of the approach which I have described was brought home to me forcefully some time later. A seven-year-old, who felt keenly the injustices Native Americans have suffered, told me that one night he was watching a TV program in which he saw Native Americans portrayed as wildly attacking peaceful settlers. "I went right up to the TV and turned it off. I told my mother and father that that wasn't a fair movie." ❐

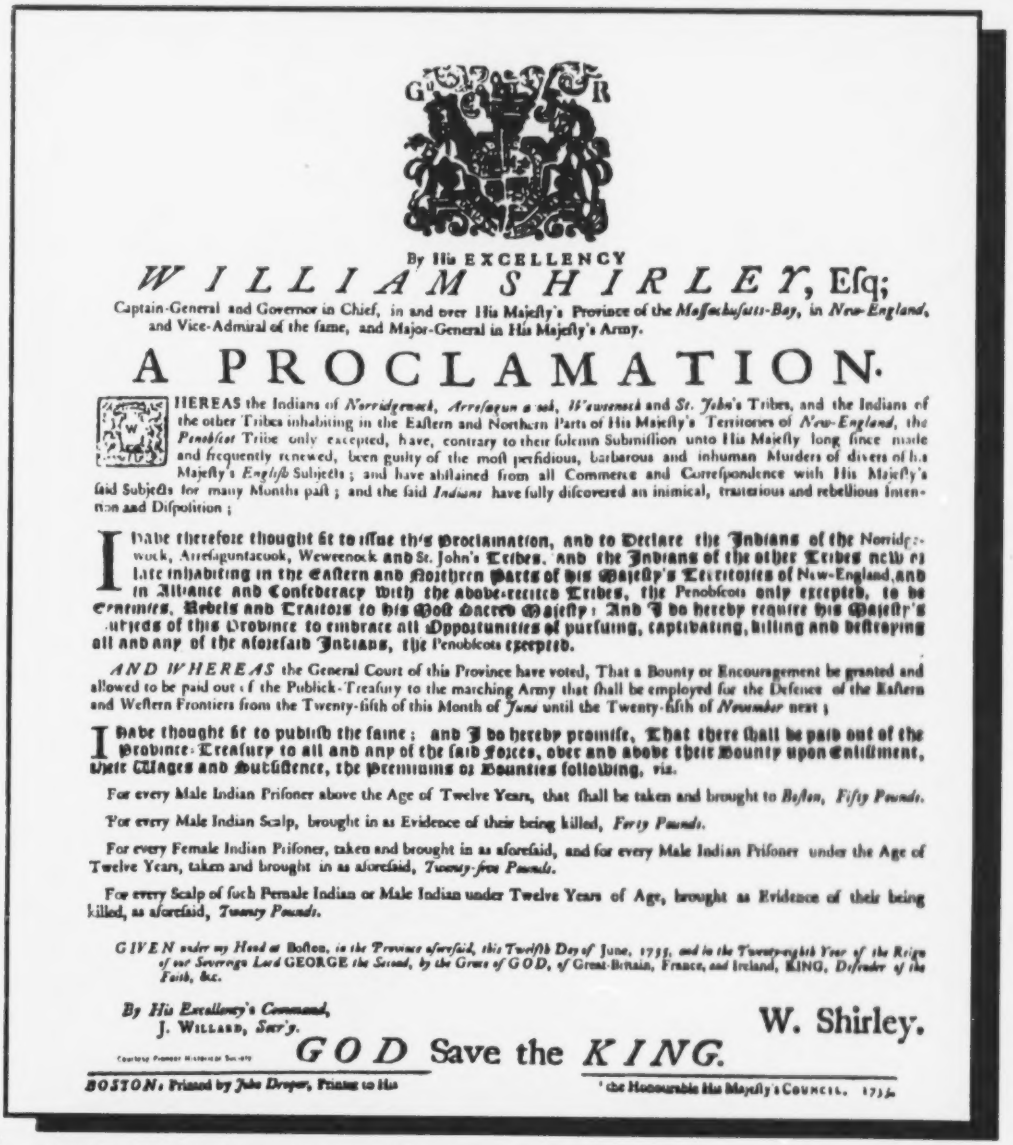
Reprinted from the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes.

Scalping

A Practice Dating to Ancient Greece

Because the image of "Indians" presented to children in this society is one of fierceness, savagery, and violence, it is possible that some of your students may mention "Indian scalping." If this happens, the following may prove useful....

Scalping had been known in Europe as far back as ancient Greece. The practice in the American colonies of paying bounties for native scalps — similar to the English practice in Ireland of paying bounties for heads — is credited to Governor Kieft of New Netherlands. By attaching a profit motive to the practice of scalping, Europeans were encouraged to step up the slaughter of native people to ease the takeover of more territory. By 1703 the Massachusetts Bay Colony was offering $60 for each Native scalp. And in 1756, Pennsylvania Governor Morris, in his Declaration of War against the Lenni Lenape people, offered "130 Pieces of Eight, for the Scalp of Every Male Indian Enemy, above the Age of Twelve Years," and "50 Pieces of Eight for the Scalp of Every Indian Woman, produced as evidence of their being killed." Massachusetts, in this period, was offering bounties of 40 pounds for a male Indian scalp, and 20 pounds for scalps of females or of children under 12 years old. Thus, the European practice of paying for the scalps of men *and* woman reflected the intent of their warfare — the annihilation of the native population. As this became clear, native nations responded to the threat and changed their own methods of warfare, including the practice of taking scalps.



By His EXCELLENCY

WILLIAM SHIRLEY, Esq;

Captain-General and Governor in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*, in *New-England*, and Vice-Admiral of the same, and Major-General in His Majesty's Army.

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the Indians of *Norridgewock*, *Arresaguntacook*, *Wawenock* and *St. John's* Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of His Majesty's Territories of *New-England*, the *Penobscot* Tribe only excepted, have, contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed, been guilty of the most perfidious, barbarous and inhuman Murders of divers of his Majesty's *English* Subjects; and have abstained from all Commerce and Correspondence with His Majesty's said Subjects for many Months past; and the said *Indians* have fully discovered an inimical, traiterious and rebellious Intention and Disposition;

I have therefore thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to Declare the Indians of the Norridgewock, Arresaguntacook, Wewrenock and St. John's Tribes, and the Indians of the other Tribes now or late inhabiting in the Eastern and Northern Parts of his Majesty's Territories of New-England, and in Alliance and Confederacy with the above-recited Tribes, the Penobscots only excepted, to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to his Most Sacred Majesty: And I do hereby require His Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and any of the aforesaid Indians, the Penobscots excepted.

AND WHEREAS the General Court of this Province have voted, That a Bounty or Encouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick-Treasury to the marching Army that shall be employed for the Defence of the Eastern and Western Frontiers from the Twenty-fifth of this Month of *June* until the Twenty-fifth of *November* next;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province-Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Enlistment, their Wages and Subsistence, the Premiums or Bounties following, viz.

For every Male Indian Prisoner above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken and brought to *Boston*, *Fifty Pounds*.

For every Male Indian Scalp, brought in as Evidence of their being killed, *Forty Pounds*.

For every Female Indian Prisoner, taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, *Twenty-five Pounds*.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under Twelve Years of Age, brought as Evidence of their being killed, as aforesaid, *Twenty Pounds*.

GIVEN under my Hand at Boston, *in the Province aforesaid, this Twelfth Day of* June, *1755, and in the Twenty-eighth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord* GEORGE *the Second, by the Grace of* GOD, *of* Great-Britain, France, *and* Ireland, KING, *Defender of the Faith, &c.*

By His Excellency's Command,
J. WILLARD, *Sec'y.*

W. Shirley.

GOD Save the KING.

BOSTON: Printed by *John Draper*, Printer to His Honourable His Majesty's COUNCIL. 1755.

British 1755 proclamation offering 40 pounds for the scalp of an adult Indian male, 20 pounds for the scalp of an Indian woman or child.

Much of what is written about "Indian" violence and scalping reflects the perspectives of the Europeans who wrote the early books and articles describing the period. Accounts written by Native American people would differ in their version of who was or was not cruel, or who was and who was not defending their homes. But it is always the victors who write the history books, and it is the white viewpoint which has dominated most accounts of our past.□

Reprinted from Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes, *Council on Interracial Books for Children.*

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Once Upon a Genocide...

Christopher Columbus in Children's Literature

By Bill Bigelow

Children's biographies of Christopher Columbus function as primers on racism and colonialism. They teach youngsters to accept the right of white people to rule over people of color, of powerful nations to dominate weaker nations. And because the Columbus myth is so pervasive — Columbus's "discovery" is probably the *only* historical episode with which all my students at Jefferson High School are familiar — it inhibits children from developing democratic, multicultural, and anti-racist attitudes.

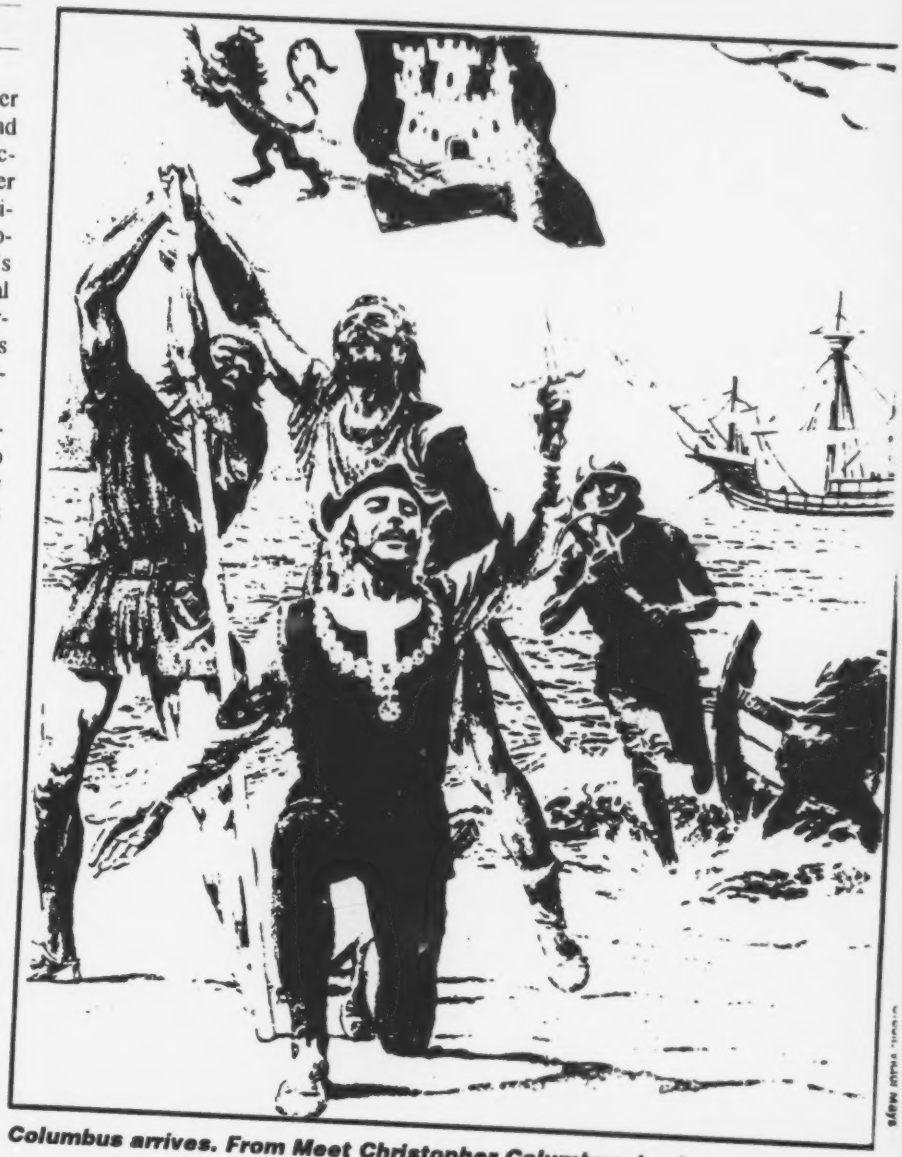
Almost without exception, children's biographies of Columbus depict the journey to the New World as a "great adventure" led by "probably the greatest sailor of his time." It's a story of courage and superhuman tenacity. Columbus is brave, smart and determined.

But behind this romanticized portrayal is a gruesome reality. For Columbus, land was real estate and it didn't matter that other people were already living there; if he "discovered" it, he took it. If he needed guides or translators, he kidnapped them. If his men wanted women, he captured sex slaves. If the indigenous people resisted, he countered with vicious dogs, hangings, and mutilations.

On his second voyage, desperate to show his royal patrons a return on their investment, Columbus rounded up some 1,500 Taíno Indians on the island of Hispaniola and chose 500 as slaves to be sold in Spain. Slavery did not show a profit as almost all the slaves died en route to Spain or soon after their arrival. Nonetheless, he wrote, "Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold."(2)

Columbus decided to concentrate on the search for gold. He ordered every Indian 14 years and older to deliver a regular quota of gold. Those who failed had their hands chopped off. In two years of the Columbus regime, probably a quarter of a million people died. (3)

This article follows Columbus as he sails through eight children's biographies [see box next page], comparing the books' with the historical record, then analyzing how these accounts may influence young readers. I especially focus on portrayals of Columbus's relationship to Native Americans and how these accounts justify racism and other social inequalities. I conclude with an examination of the pedagogy implicit in these books and a discussion of more appropriate ways to teach Columbus.



Columbus arrives. From Meet Christopher Columbus, by James T. de Kay.

Portrait of Columbus

Why did Columbus want to sail west to get to the Indies? The answer offered to children in today's books hasn't changed much since I was in fourth grade. I remember my teacher, Mrs. O'Neill, asking our class this question. As usual, I didn't have a clue, but up went Jimmy Martin's hand. "Why do men want to go to the moon?" he said triumphantly. Mrs. O'Neill was delighted and told us all how smart Jimmy was because he answered a question with a question. In other words: just because — because he was curious, because

he loved adventure, because he wanted to prove he could do it — just because. And for years I accepted this explanation (and envied Jimmy Martin).

In reality, Columbus wanted to become rich. It was no easy task convincing Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand to finance this highly questionable journey to the Indies, partly because his terms were outrageous. Columbus demanded 10% of all the wealth returned to Europe along the new trade route to Asia (where Columbus thought he was headed) — that's 10% of the riches brought back by *everyone*, not just by himself. And he wanted this guaranteed *forever*, for him, for his children, for their children, in perpetuity. He demanded that he be granted the titles, "Viceroy" and "Admiral of the Ocean Sea." He was to be governor of all new territories found; the "Admiral" title was hereditary and would give him a share in proceeds from naval booty.

As for Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, curiosity, adventure, and "exploration" were the last things on their minds. They wanted the tremendous profits that could be secured by finding a western passage to the Indies.

The books acknowledge — and even endorse — Columbus's demands and readily admit that securing "gold and spices" was an objective of the Enterprise. "Of course [Columbus] wanted a lot! What was wrong with that?" James de Kay's *Meet Christopher Columbus* tells second graders. But this quest for wealth is downplayed in favor of adventure. "Exploration" meant going to "strange cities" where "many wonderful things" could be seen [de Kay]. Travel was exciting: Columbus "felt the heady call of the open sea. 'I love the taste of salt spray in my face,' he told a friend, 'and the feel of a deck rising and falling under my feet...'" [Monchieri]

Books reviewed in this article:

- **Christopher Columbus and His Voyage to the New World, (Let's Celebrate Series).**
  By Robert Young,
  Silver Press, 32 pp. (2nd grade.)
- **Meet Christopher Columbus.**
  By James T. de Kay,
  Random House, 72 pp. (2nd grade.)
- **Christopher Columbus, (Great Tales Series).**
  By Jan Gleiter and Kathleen Thompson,
  Ideals, 32 pp. (3rd grade).
- **Columbus.**
  By Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire,
  Doubleday, 59 pp. (5th grade).
- **Where do you think you're going, Christopher Columbus?**
  By Jean Fritz,
  G.P. Putnam's Sons, 80 pp. (Upper elementary).
- **Christopher Columbus.**
  By Lino Monchieri (trans. by Mary Lee Grisanti),
  Silver Burdett, 62 pp. (Upper elementary).
- **Christopher Columbus: Admiral of the Ocean Sea.**
  By Mary Pope Osborne,
  Dell, 90 pp. (Upper elementary/middle school)
- **Christopher Columbus: The Intrepid Mariner, (Great Lives Series).**
  By Sean J. Dolan,
  Fawcett Columbine, 117 pp. (Middle school).

According to these eight biographies, the major reason Columbus wants to sail west is because of his deep faith in God. Columbus thought "that the Lord had chosen him to sail west across the sea to find the riches of the East for himself and to carry the Christian faith to the heathens. His name was Christopher. Had not the Lord chosen his namesake, Saint Christopher, to carry the Christ Child across the dark water of a river?" [D'Aulaire] Uncritically using a term like "heathens" to denote the indigenous peoples of America is a problem in most of the books.

Religion, curiosity, adventure — all those motives are given preference in the Columbus biographies. But each of these motives pales before the Spanish empire's quest for wealth and power. In burying these more fundamental material forces, the Columbus books encourage students to misunderstand the roots of today's foreign policy exploits. Thus students are more likely to accept platitudes — "We're involved in Latin America for freedom and democracy" — than to look for less altruistic explanations.

The Kind and Noble Columbus

None of the biographies I evaluated — all in print and widely available — disputes the ugly facts about Columbus and the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean. Yet the sad irony is that all encourage children to root for Columbus. "It was lucky that Christopher Columbus was born where he was or he might never have gone to sea." [Fritz] "There once was a boy who loved the salty sea." [D'Aulaire] Some of the books, particularly those for younger readers, refer to Columbus affectionately, using his first name. Unlike the people he will later exterminate, Columbus is treated as a real human being, one with thoughts and feelings. "When Christopher Columbus was a child, he always wanted to be like Saint Christopher. He wanted to sail to faraway places and spread the word of Christianity." [Osborne]

The series title of Robert Young's *Christopher Columbus and His Voyage to the New World* sums up the stance of every biographer: "Let's Celebrate."

The books cheer Columbus on towards the Indies. Each step on the road to "discovery" is told from his point of view. When Columbus is delayed, this is the "most unhappy part of his great adventure." [de Kay] Every successful step towards realizing the Enterprise is rewarded with exclamation marks: "Yes, [the Queen] would help Columbus!" [Osborne] "After all these years, Columbus would get his ships!" [de Kay]

Columbus's devout Christianity is a theme

The books cheer Columbus on towards the Indies. Each step on the road to "discovery" is told from his point of view.

Columbus "calm and alone, in command of his ships..." From Columbus, by the D'Aulaires.

in all the books — and is never questioned. The most insistent of these, and the worst of the lot in almost every respect, is Sean J. Dolan's *Christopher Columbus: The Intrepid Mariner*. By the second page in Dolan's reverent volume we're reading about Columbus's attachment to his leather-bound Bible. Dolan is constantly dipping us into the Admiral's thoughts. Usually these meditations run deep and pious: "[He] believed that the awe-inspiring beauty that surrounded him could only be the handiwork of the one true God, and he felt secure in his Lord and Savior's protection. If only my crewmen shared my belief, Columbus thought." And this is only on the third page — Dolan's narrative goes on like this for 114 more. The reader is practically strangled by Columbus's halo.

Jean Fritz's *Where do you think you're going, Christopher Columbus?* is the only book somewhat skeptical about religion as a motive. Fritz tells her readers that Queen Isabella "was such an enthusiastic Christian that she insisted everyone in Spain be a Christian too... Indeed, she was so religious that if she even found Christians who were not sincere Christians, she had them burned at the stake. (Choir boys sang during the burning so Isabella wouldn't have to hear the screams.)"

This is pretty strong stuff, but the implied critique would likely be lost on the book's targeted readers, upper elementary students.

The close association between Jesus, God, and Columbus in all the books, with the possible exception of Jean Fritz's, discourages children from criticizing Columbus. "Columbus marveled at how God had arranged everything for the best," the D'Aulaires write. Well, if God arranged everything, who are we, the insignificant readers, to question?

Moreover, no book even hints that the Indians believed in their own God or gods who also watched over and cared about them. The Columbus expedition may be the first encounter between two peoples — Us and Them — where children will learn that "God is on *our* side."

Evils? Blame the Workers

Columbus's journey across the Atlantic was not easy, according to most of the books, because his crew was such a wretched bunch. The sailors are stupid, superstitious, cowardly, and sometimes scheming. Columbus, on the other hand, is brave, wise and godly. These characterizations, repeated frequently in many of the books, protect the Columbus myth; anything bad that happens, like murder and slavery, can always be blamed on the men. Columbus, the leader, is pure of heart. (These negative portrayals are less pronounced in Monchieri's *Christopher Columbus*. The book depicts seamen as pliant and ignorant, but at least concedes that "a most all proved to be good sailors.")

Taken together, the books' portrayals serv as a kind of anti-working class pro-bos polemic. "Soon [Columbus] rose above hi shipmates, for he was clever and capable an could make others carry out hi orders."[D'Aulaire] Evidently, ordinar seamen are not "clever and capable," an thus are good merely for carrying out th instructions of others. "Soon [Columbus forgot that he was only the son of a humble weaver," the D'Aulaires write, as if a background as a worker were something to be ashamed of. The books encourage children to identify with Columbus's hardships, even though his men worked and slept in horrible conditions while the future Admiral slept under a canopy bed in his private cabin. The lives of those who labored for Columbus are either ignored or held in contempt.

The "Discovery"

At the core of the Columbus myth — and repeated by all eight books — is the notion that Columbus "discovered" America. Indeed, it's almost as if the same writer churned out one ever so slightly different version after another.

James T. de Kay describes the scene in *Meet Christopher Columbus*:

"The sailors rowed Columbus to the shore.

He stepped on the beach. He got on his knees and said a prayer of thanks.

Columbus named the island San Salvador. He said it now belonged to Ferdinand and Isabella.

He tried to talk to the people on San Salvaaor. But they could not understand him."

Of course *he* couldn't understand *them*, either. But de Kay attributes the inability to understand solely to the Indians. Is it these Indians' implied ignorance that allows heavily armed men to come onto their land and claim it in the name of a kingdom thousands of miles away? In *Christopher Columbus and His Voyage to the New World*, Robert Young doesn't even tell his young readers of the *people* on these islands. Young's Columbus found "lands" but no people; in illustrations we see only palm trees and empty beaches.

Why don't any of the books ask students to think about the assumptions that underpinned this land grab? Naively, I kept waiting for some book to insert just a trace of doubt: "Why do you think Columbus felt he could claim land for Spain when there were already people living there?" or "Columbus doesn't write in his journal why he felt entitled to steal other people's property. What do you think?"

This scene of Columbus's first encounter with the Indians — read in school by virtually every child — is a powerful metaphor about relations between different countries and races. It is a lesson not just about the world 500 years ago, but about the world *today*. Clothed, armed, Christian, white men from a more technologically "advanced" nation arrive in a land peopled by darker skinned, naked, unarmed, non-Christians — and take over. Because no book indicates which characteristic of *either* group necessitates or excuses this kind of bullying, students are left alone to puzzle it out. Might makes right. Whites should rule over people who aren't white. Christians should control non-Christians. "Advanced" nations should dominate "backward" nations. Each and every answer a student might glean from the books' text and images invariably justifies colonialism and racism.

In Columbus's New World "adventures," the lives of the Indians are a kind of "muzak" — insignificant background noise. Only one book, *Where do you think you're going, Christopher Columbus?*, tries to imagine what the Indians might have been thinking about the arrival of the Spaniards. Still, the point here seems more to gently poke fun at Columbus and crew than to seriously consider the Indians' point of view: "...if the Spaniards were surprised to see naked natives, the natives were even more surprised to see dressed Spaniards. All that cloth over their bodies! What were they trying to hide? Tails, perhaps?" Jean Fritz's interior monologue for the Indians makes fun of the explorers but in the process trivializes the Indians' concerns.

Not a single Columbus biography ever asks children: "What might the Indians have thought about the actions of Columbus and his men?" According to Mary Pope Osborne, Columbus "thought [the Indians] could easily be brought under control and that they had no religion of their own. He wrote that they would make 'good Christians and good servants.'" But Osborne doesn't prompt students to wonder what the Indians would have thought about Columbus's plans.

The silent Indians in Columbus stories have a contemporary consequence. The message is that white people in developed societies have consciousness and voice, but Third World people are thoughtless and voiceless objects. The books rehearse students in a way of looking at the world that begins from the assumption: they are not like us. A corollary is that we are more competent in determining the conditions of their lives: their social and economic systems, their political alliances and so on. Intervention in Vietnam, subversion of the government headed by Salvador Allende in Chile, the invasions of Grenada and Panama, the attempted overthrow by proxy of the Nicaraguan and Angolan governments: our right to decide what's best for *them* is basic to the conduct of this nation's foreign policy. The Columbus myth, as most children's first exposure to "foreign policy," helps condition young people to accept the unequal distribution of power in the world.

Theft, Slavery and Murder

Columbus's genocidal policies towards the Indians were initiated during his second journey. The three books aimed at children in early elementary grades, Gleiter and Thompson's *Christopher Columbus*, de Kay's *Meet Christopher Columbus* and Young's *Christopher Columbus and His Voyage to the New World*, conveniently stop the story after his first journey. The Columbus myth can take root in young minds without the complications of the slavery and mass murder to come.

Columbus returned to a hero's welcome in Spain after his first trip. He also arrived telling all kinds of lies about gold mines and

What do you mean, you haven't read the Wilder Books?

By Doris Seale

The town I mostly grew up in was big enough to have a Carnegie library, one of those squat, blood-red brick buildings, and it was the treasure house of my childhood. I don't remember how old I was when I discovered the Laura Ingalls Wilder books, but I was intrigued by them, and showed them to my dad. Someway, I couldn't say just how he worked it, we didn't take any of them home that day.

A few years ago, tired of hearing, "What do you *mean* you haven't read the Wilder books?!" and still curious, I opened one and found out why my dad didn't check them out for me. In *Little House on the Prairie*, for example, on page 137:

The naked wild men stood by the fireplace...Laura smelled a horrible bad smell...Their faces were bold and fierce...

And so on. Many years stand between the nowday me and the round little girl with braids who, when this sort of thing came up in the classroom, used to sit, with dry mouth and pounding heart, head down, *praying* that nobody would look at her. But the feeling is the same. The heart begins to pound, the mouth goes dry. Only now, the emotion is not sick shame, but rage. ❐

The above is excerpted from an essay on children's literature in the book, Through Indian Eyes, *edited by Seale and Beverly Slapin. Seale who is Santee, Cree and white, is a children's librarian in Brookline, Mass.*

spices and unlimited amounts of wealth. The admiral needed royal backing for a second trip, and had to convince his sponsors that the islands contained more than parrots and naked heathens.

During this second voyage, in February of 1495, Columbus launched the slave raids against the Taínos of Hispaniola. Four of the eight books I reviewed — the ones aimed at older children — admit that Columbus took Indians as slaves. [Monchieri, Fritz, Osborne, and Dolan] Their critique, however, is muted. No account tells children what slavery meant for its victims. One of the books, Monchieri's *Christopher Columbus*, says that taking slaves was "a great failing of Columbus... He saw nothing wrong with enslaving the American Indians and making them work for Spanish masters... Missionaries protested against this policy, but they were not listened to." End of discussion. Mary Pope Osborne in *Christopher Columbus: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, writes that "this terrible treatment of the Indians was Columbus's real downfall." In fact Osborne is unable to offer even this minimal critique of the admiral without at the same time justifying his actions: "Since Columbus felt despair and disappointment about not finding gold in the Indies, he decided to be like the African explorers and try to sell these Indians as slaves."[Osborne] Neither book ever describes the character of slave life — or slave death.

The other two biographies offer Columbus's justifications for taking slaves: "African explorers were always sending Africans back to Spanish slave markets, Columbus told himself. Besides, the natives were all heathens. It wasn't as if he were selling Christians into slavery." [Fritz] Dolan at one point blames it all on the men: "Given the attitude of the men at large, however, [Columbus] had little choice but to give his approval to the slaving sorties."

Imagine, if you will, Nazi war crimes described in this way — nothing about the suffering of the victims, tepid criticism of the perpetrators, the crimes explained through the rationalizations of Hitler and his generals. How long would these books last in our schools?

From the beginning, locating gold was Columbus's primary objective. In one passage, not included in any of the children's books, Columbus wrote: "Gold is a wonderful thing! Whoever owns it is lord of all he wants. With gold it is even possible to open for souls the way to paradise."(4) Two of the eight authors, Fritz and Dolan, describe Columbus's system for attempting to extract gold from the Indians. Dolan writes that Columbus instituted "a system of forced tribute: each Indian was to provide a certain amount of gold each year. Penalties for failure to comply with this rule included flogging, enslavement, or death." Nothing here about cutting people's hands off, which is what Columbus did, but still it's pretty explicit. Fritz writes simply that Indians who didn't deliver enough gold "were punished." She concludes that "between 1494 and 1496 one-third of the native population of Hispaniola was killed, sold, or scared away." The passive voice in Fritz's version — "was killed, sold, or scared away" —protects the perpetrators: exactly who caused these deaths?

More significantly, these accounts fail to recognize the Indians' humanity. The books' descriptions are clinical and factual, like those of a coroner. What kind of suffering must these people have gone through? How did it feel to have their civilization completely destroyed in just a few years? What of the children who watched their parents butchered by the Spanish gold-seekers? These books show no passion or outrage — at Columbus, at the social and economic system he represented, or at textbooks for hiding this inhumanity for so many years. This devastation happened to human beings, several hundred thousand of them, maybe more. Why don't the writers of these books get angry?

I find the most "honest" books Columbus's Enterprise — those that slavery and other crimes — the mo tressing. They lay out the facts, descri deaths, and then it's on to the next para with no look back. These books fo callousness toward human suffering – it simply a callousness toward peop color? Apparently students are suppos value bravery, cunning, and perseve over a people's right to life and self det nation. The stories prepare young peop watch without outrage the abstract ni news accounts — a quick segment abo army massacre in El Salvador followed commercial for Chrysler Le Baron.

Contempt for Native Resistan

Given that Columbus biographies scar consider Indians as human beings, it's surprising that native resistance to the Sp iards' atrocities is either barely ackno edged or treated with hostility. Gleiter a Thompson's *Christopher Columbus* no that in future trips Columbus "fought w the natives." In a sentence, Lino Monchi writes, "The Indians became rebellious b cause [Columbus] compelled them to ha over their gold." At least here the auth credits the Indians with what might be legitimate cause for revolt, though offers n further details. Mary Pope Osborne burie the cause of resistance in non-explanatory

Credit: Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire

A racist drawing from D'Aulaires' Columbus. They say the Indians of Dominica and Guadeloupe "were cannibals who ate their enemies." No historical evidence validates this claim.

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victimless prose: "But the settlers had run into trouble with the Indians, and there had been a lot of fighting."

Some writers choose to portray Indian resistance not as self-defense, but as originating from the indigenous people's inherently violent nature. In *Meet Christopher Columbus*, "unfriendly Indians" surprise the innocent Spaniards: "Suddenly more than 50 Indians jumped out from behind the trees. They had bows and arrows. They attacked the men. The men fought back." Thus, Indian resistance to the Spaniards' invasion and land grab is not termed "freedom fighting," but instead is considered "unfriendly." Ironically, this story portrays the violence of the Spaniards as self-defense. Note that in this quote, the Spaniards are "men" and the Indians are, well, just Indians.

The books which bother to differentiate between groups of Indians single out the Caribs for special contempt. Caribs are presented as cannibals, even though no historical evidence exists to corroborate such a claim.(5) The Caribs lived on islands "so wild and steep, it seemed as if the waterfalls came tumbling out of the clouds. The Indians who lived there were wild too. They were cannibals who ate their enemies."[D'Aulaire] In Dolan's *Christopher Columbus: The Intrepid Mariner*, Columbus sends an armed contingent to "explore" the island that today is St. Croix. Because Caribs attack the Spaniards, Dolan considers this resistance sufficient to label the Caribs as ferocious.

In fact, according to the account of Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca, an eyewitness, the Indians only attacked when the Spaniards trapped them in a cove.(6) In today's parlance, the Caribs were the "radicals" and "extremists" — in other words, they tenaciously defended their land and freedom.

The books condition young people to reject the right of the oppressed to rebel. *We* have a right to own *their* land, and they should not protest — at least not violently. Those who do resist will be slapped with a pejorative descriptor — cannibal, savage, communist, militant, radical, hard-liner, extremist — and subdued. Black South Africans' fight against apartheid, the Palestinians' intifada, Honduran peasants organizing for land redistribution, the United Farm Workers' quest for union recognition: the Columbus biographies implicitly discourage students from paying serious attention to these and other contemporary movements for social justice. Obviously, they leave children similarly ill-prepared to respect current Indian struggles for land and fishing rights.

A skirmish described in Meet Christopher Columbus by de Kay.

Columbus's Legacy

I expected each book to end with at least some reflection on the meaning of Columbus's voyages. None did. In fact, only one book, *Meet Christopher Columbus*, even suggests that today's world has anything to do with Columbus: Thanks to the Admiral, "Thousands of people crossed the ocean to America. This 'new world' became new countries: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and many others."

It's much simpler for the authors to ignore both short and long term consequences of Columbus's Enterprise. Instead of linking the nature of Columbus's Spain to 20th century America, each book functions as a kind of secular Book of Genesis: In the beginning there was Columbus — he was good and so are we.

This is a grave omission. In addition to the genocide of native peoples in the Caribbean, the most immediate effect of Columbus's voyages was the initiation of the Atlantic slave trade between Africa and America (see story page 68). (7)

Colonialism and slavery: this was the new world Columbus did not so much discover as help to invent. In the emerging commercial ethos of his society, human beings were commodities whose value was measured largely in monetary terms. The natural environment was likewise cherished not for its beauty but for the wealth that could be extracted. Columbus's Enterprise and the plunder that ensued contributed mightily to the growth of the nascent mercantile capitalism of Europe. His lasting contribution was to augment a social order that confronts the world in commercial terms: How much is it worth?

Asking Why?

Why are Columbus biographies characterized by such bias and omission? I doubt any writers, publishers or teachers consciously set out to poison the minds of the young. The Columbus story teaches important values, some would argue. Here was a young man who, despite tremendous adversity, maintained and finally achieved his objectives. Fear and narrow-mindedness kept others from that which he finally accomplished.

But in the Columbus biographies, these

decent values intermingle with biases against working class people, people of color, and Third World nations. The blindness of writers and educators to these biases is simply an indication of how pervasive they are in the broader society. The seeds of imperialism, exploitation and racism were planted with Columbus's first trans-Atlantic Enterprise — and these seeds have taken root. Without doubt, ours is a very different world than 15th and 16th century Spanish America, but there is a lingering inheritance: the tendency for powerful groups to value profit over humanity, racial and cultural differences used to justify exploitation and inequality, vast disparities in living conditions for different

The biographies require readers merely to listen, not to think.

social classes, economically and militarily strong nations attempting to control the fates of weaker nations. Hence, life amidst injustice in today's United States inures many of us to the injustice of 500 years earlier. Characteristics that appear to someone as natural and inevitable in the 20th century will likely appear as natural and inevitable in the descriptions of the world five centuries ago.

The Biographies' Pedagogy

The Columbus stories encourage passive reading, and never pose questions for children to think about. Did Columbus have a right to claim Indian land in the name of the Spanish crown? Were those Indians who resisted violently justified in doing so? Why does the United States commemorate a Columbus Day instead of a Genocide Day? The narratives require readers merely to listen, not to think. The text is everything, the reader nothing. Not only are young readers conditioned to accept social hierarchy — colonialism and racism — they are also rehearsed in an authoritarian mode of learning.

By implication, I've tried in this review essay to suggest the outlines of a more truthful history of Columbus and the "discovery" of America. First, the indigenous peoples of America must be accorded the status of full human beings with inalienable rights to self

Dear Diary...

I, Columbus: My Journal — 1492-3, Edited by Peter and Connie Roop, Illustrated by Peter E. Hanson, Walker and Co., New York, 1990, 57 pp.

Diaries are a seductive form of literature. "This is the real thing," we imagine as we sit down to read. A silent bargain is struck with the writer: You let me into your private thoughts and I'll try to look at the world through your eyes.

This is the danger of the Roops' book. *I, Columbus* invites children into the colonialist mind — and leaves them there. The very structure of the book encourages children to view colonial conquest from the standpoint of the white European conqueror. Youngsters buddy-up to Columbus and ride along on his "voyage to the unknown," as the Roops call it.

Clearly the book is intended to foster an admiration for Columbus. The Roops write in their acknowledgments: "Most of all we express our awe of Columbus himself, a man with a vision and the determination to accomplish it."

The Roops selected passages from Columbus's journal that portray him at his most appealing. Indeed the Roops' Columbus is more saint than conqueror. For example, on first encounter with the indigenous people of Guanahaní the Roops' Columbus is strict with his crew and kind to the Indians: "I warned my men to take nothing from the people without giving something in exchange." They neglect to include a passage from Columbus's journal that foreshadows his massive slave raids: "They [the Indians] should be good servants and of quick intelligence, since I see that they very soon say all that is said to them..."

The Roops' October 14 diary entry acknowledges that Columbus "captured" Indians, but fails to include a later passage from that day that places this act in a broader context. Columbus wrote: "...I caused [the Indians] to be taken in order to carry them off that they may learn our language and return. However, when Your Highnesses so command, they can all be carried off to Castile or held captive in the island itself, since with fifty men they would be all kept in subjection and forced to do whatever may be wished." Columbus's captives resist, by attempting to escape, sometimes successfully. The Roops edit this resistance out of their book, as they also omit Columbus's further kidnappings. On November 12, Columbus describes the kidnap of "seven head of women, small and large, and three children."

As in the traditional myth, *I, Columbus* largely ignores the Taino people. On October 29, Columbus enters Taino homes which "were well swept and clean, and their furnishing very well arranged; all were made of very beautiful palm branches." None of this in the Roop version. And on December 16 Columbus says of the Taínos, "They are the best people in the world and beyond all the mildest..." None of this in the Roop version. Columbus even refers to some Taíno leaders, like the Hispaniola cacique (leader), Guacanagarí, by their given names. The Roops' Indians have no names.

I, Columbus follows the same cheerleading pattern as other biographies. However, unlike other biographical accounts, the journal structure more easily excuses the Roops from prompting students to question the myth. We're only letting Columbus tell his own story, they can claim. Even more effectively than other biographies, the Roops' diary silences the perspectives of the "discovered." ❐

Note: In an earlier version of this review I wrote that the Roops fabricated a number of entries in Columbus's journal. I counted 15 entries which did not correspond with the journal transcribed and edited by the Spanish priest, Bartolome de las Casas. The Las Casas' transcription of Columbus's journal is the only authoritative edition on the diary Columbus kept on his first voyage. In preparing my review, I compared two separate translations of this journal to the Roops' book. However, I subsequently learned that the Roops based their book, *I, Columbus*, not on the Las Casas edition, but on a "modernized" and "unique" version of Columbus's journal written in 1987 by Robert Fuson. Fuson draws on Las Casas, but adds material from other sources — which he then puts in the first person, writing as if he were Columbus. In their book, the Roops did not use Columbus's "own words," as they wrote in the prologue, but nor did they fabricate the entries, as I stated.

— Bill Bigelow

Credit: Margot Tomes

Columbus as an adventurous young man. From the Fritz book on Christopher Columbus.

determination. The tale of "discovery" needs to be told from their perspective as well as from the Europeans'. Although there is little documentation of how the Indians interpreted the Spaniards' arrival and conquest, readers could be encouraged to think about these events from the native point of view. Columbus's interior monologue should not be the only set of thoughts represented in the story.

A more accurate tale of Columbus would not simply probe his personal history but would also analyze the social and economic system he represented. And children might be asked to think about how today's world was shaped by the events of 1492. Above all, young readers must be invited to think and critique, not simply required to passively absorb others' historical interpretations.

Until we create humane and truthful materials, teachers may decide to boycott the entire Columbus canon. The problem with this approach is that the distortions and inadequacies characterizing this literature are also found in other children's books.

A better solution is to equip students to read critically these and other stories — inviting children to become detectives, investigating their biographies, novels and textbooks for bias. In fact, because the Columbus books are so bad, they make perfect classroom resources to learn how to read for social as well as for literal meaning. After students have been introduced to a critical history of Columbus, they could probe materials for accuracy. Do the books lie outright? What is omitted from the accounts that would be necessary for a more complete understanding of Columbus and his encounters with native cultures? What motives are given Columbus, and how do those compare with the actual objectives of the admiral and the Spanish monarchs? Whom does the book "root" for, and how is this accomplished? What role do illustrations play in shaping the view of Columbus? Why do the books tell the story as they do? Who in our society benefits and who is hurt from these presentations?(8)

Teachers could assign children to write their own Columbus biographies — and some of these could be told from Indians' points of view. Or youngsters might take issues from their own lives suggested by the European invasion of America — fighting, fairness, stealing, racism — and write stories drawn from these themes.

Significantly, to invite students to question the injustices embedded in text material is implicitly to invite them to question the injustices embedded in the society itself. Isn't it about time we used the Columbus myth to allow students to begin discovering the truth? ❐

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Notes

1. Spanish colonist, Michele de Cuneo, quoted in Hans Koning, *Columbus: His Enterprise*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1976, p. 84.

2. Quoted in Koning, p. 85.

3. See Bartolome de las Casas (Andree Collard, trans. and ed.), *History of the Indies*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971; Benjamin Keen (trans. and ed.), *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus By His Son Ferdinand*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1959; Koning, *Columbus His Enterprise*; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1942,; Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, Harper and Row, New York, 1980; and Milton Meltzer, *Columbus and the World Around Him*, Franklin Watts, New York, 1990. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, pp. 487-488.

4. Christopher Columbus in a letter to Isabella and Ferdinand, 1503, cited in Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, *Wasi'chu: The Continuing Indian Wars*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979, p. 16.

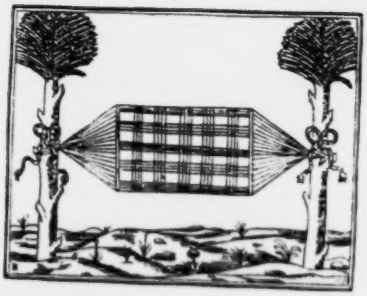
5. Jan Carew, *Fulcrums of Change: The Origins of Racism in the Americas and Other Essays*, Africa World Press, Trenton, NY, 1988, p. 41.

6. See Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, pp. 416-417.

7. Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: Precolonial History 1450-1850*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1961, pp.45-46.

8. Bigelow, "Discovering Columbus: Rereading the Past," See p. 6.

Alphabet of Things that the Americas Gave to the World



A avocado, amaranth, asphalt
B buffalo, beaver pelts, brazilian dye
C canoe, corn, caucus, chocolate, cocoa, cassava, chicle, cotton, cashews, chayotes, catfish, chilis, cayenne
D democracy, dyes, dog sleds
E ecology
F fertilizer, food preservation
G gum, guano deposits, grits
H hammock, hominy, hickory nut
I impeachment, ipecac
J jerky, Jerusalem artichoke
K kidney beans, kayaks
L libraries, long pants, llamas
M milpa, moccasins, manioc, medicines,
N nuts, names (half the state names of USA)
O Oklahoma
P potatoes, parrots, pumpkins, peanuts, popcorn, pineapple, passenger pigeon, pear cactus, parkas, peppers, pomegranate, passion fruit, papaya, pecan, paprika
Q quinine, quinoa
R rubber
S squash, silver, sisal, sunflowers, sweet potatoes, succotash
T turkey, tapioca pudding, tomatoes, tortillas, tobacco, tar
U USA Constitution (influenced by Iroquois)
V vanilla
W wild rice, witch hazel, words (several thousand words in English and Spanish), white potatoes
X xylophone (the marimba of both African and American origin)
Y yams
Z zero, zucchini

Source: Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers*, Crown, New York, 1988.

The Untold Story

The following story can be used by teachers as a model of student writing and/or as a text that can be assembled and illustrated by young children. The story is printed in large type so teachers can cut out sentence strips, place them on the bottom of a page and duplicate copies for students to illustrate and read together.Tina Thomas is a Cherokee, African-American student at Jefferson High School in Portland, Oregon.

By Tina Thomas

Once upon a time a group of people lived on an island, Bohio (now called Hispaniola) in the Caribbean. These people, whom I consider my people, were proud of their island. They built beautiful farms and villages from dirt and rock. They respected the plants and animals. Many people lived on Bohio. They called themselves Taínos.

One day, some of my people saw three boats far off in the ocean. They gathered around and watched as the boats came closer and closer. When the boats reached land, strange-looking people got off.

These people were not like us. Their skin was pink, their hair the color of sand, and their eyes the color of the open sea. They wore strange items that covered their bodies, even though it was very hot.

Their leader was a man called "Christopher Columbus." He immediately put a cross and flag down and acted as if the land were now his. This was odd. We did not believe anyone could own the land. Besides, we were already living there.

Through motions and gestures, it became clear Columbus wanted gold. He wanted us to find it for him.

We tried to explain there was little gold on our land, just a few small pieces gathered from the water. "We have no gold. There is no gold here," a man said in the Taíno language.

Columbus appeared very angry and walked away. My people were afraid of his anger. They wondered what he planned to do next.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

After several months, Columbus returned to our island for a second visit. He brought hundreds of people on 17 boats. Before he left this time, he captured many of my people; over 500 were forced onto his boats. We later heard they had been taken to Spain to be sold as slaves. Many died on this voyage to Spain. Their bodies were thrown into the ocean.

During this second visit, Columbus again told my people to bring him gold. "If you do not," he warned," we shall slay your people."

Our people had to bring him gold, even though it was very difficult to find. Columbus made us wear buttons to show we had brought him gold. If we didn't have our buttons, my people's hands were cut off and they bled to death.

My people formed an army. But we did not have the guns, swords and vicious dogs used by Columbus and his crew. We were defeated.

My people ran for their lives into the mountains. Those who were caught were hung or burned to death. Many others killed themselves. Two years had passed and over half of the Taíno people of Bohio were dead.

My people's peaceful and proud land was taken over and destroyed. These newcomers cut down all the forests. They let their pigs and cows eat all the grass. Thousands of my people's lives were destroyed for these people's pleasure.

Before long, the conquerors killed almost all the Taínos. Other native peoples in the Americas were also attacked, some with weapons, some with terrible new diseases. But not all were destroyed. My people have survived.

We have little to show our children as proof of what happened to the Taínos. But we have our stories, told from generation to generation. The stories tell of the cruel genocide of my people, hundreds of years ago: "Once upon a time, in an untold story...."

And Then I Went to School:

Memories of a Pueblo Childhood

By Joe Suina

I lived with my grandmother when I was five through nine years of age. It was the early fifties when electricity had not yet entered our Pueblo homes. The village day school and health clinic were first to have it, and to the unsuspecting Cochiti, this was the approach of a new era in their uncomplicated lives.

Transportation was simple. Two good horses and a sturdy wagon met the daily needs of a villager. Only five, maybe six individuals possessed an automobile in the Pueblo of four hundred. A flatbed truck fixed with side rails and a canvas top made the usual Saturday morning trip to Santa Fe. It was always loaded beyond capacity with people and their wares headed for town for a few staples. The straining old truck with its escort of a dozen barking dogs made a noisy exit, northbound from the village.

A Sense of Closeness

During those years, grandmother and I lived beside the plaza in a one-room house. Inside, we had a traditional fireplace, a makeshift cabinet for our few tin cups and bowls, and a wooden crate carried our two buckets of all-purpose water. At the innermost part of the room were two rolls of bedding — thick quilts, sheepskin, and assorted — which we used as comfortable sitting couches by day and unrolled for sleeping by night. A wooden pole the length of one side of the room was suspended about ten inches from the vigas and draped with a modest collection of colorful shawls, blankets, and sashes, making this part of the room most interesting. In one corner sat a bulky metal trunk for our ceremonial wear and a few valuables. A dresser which was traded for her well-known pottery held the few articles of clothing we owned and the "goody bag" — an old flour sack Grandma always kept filled with brown candy, store-bought cookies, and Fig Newtons. These were saturated with a sharp odor of moth balls. Nevertheless, they made a fine snack with coffee before we turned in for the night. Tucked securely beneath my blankets, I listened to one of her stories about how it was when she was a little girl. These accounts appeared so old fashioned compared to the way we lived. Sometimes she softly sang a song from a ceremony. In this way, I went off to sleep each night.

Earlier in the evening we would make our way to a relative's house if someone had not already come to visit us. There, I'd play with the children while the adults caught up on all the latest news. Ten cent comic books were finding their way into the Pueblo homes. Exchanging "old" comics for "new" ones was a serious matter that involved adults as well. Adults favored mystery and romance stories. For us children these were the first links to the world beyond the Pueblo. We enjoyed looking at them and role-playing our favorite hero rounding up the villains. Grandmother once made me a cape to leap tall buildings with. It seems everyone preferred being a cowboy rather than an Indian since cowboys were always victorious. Sometimes stories were related to both children and adults at these get-togethers. They were highlighted by refreshments of coffee and sweet bread or fruit pies baked in the outdoor oven. Winter months would most likely include roasted pinon nuts and dried deer meat for all to share. These evening gatherings and the sense of closeness diminished as radios and televisions increased over the following years. It was never to be the same again.

The winter months are among my fondest memories. A warm fire crackled and danced brightly in the fireplace, and the aroma of delicious stew filled our one-room house. The thick adobe walls wrapped around the two of us protectingly during the long freezing nights. To me, the house was just right. Grandmother's affection completed the warmth and security I will always remember.

Being the only child at grandmother's, I had lots of attention and plenty of reasons to feel good about myself. As a pre-schooler, I already had chores of chopping firewood and hauling in fresh water each day. After "heavy work" I would run to her and flex what I was convinced were my gigantic biceps. Grandmother would state that at the rate I was going I would soon attain the status of a man like the adult males in the village. Her shower of praise made me feel like the Mr. Indian Universe of all time. At age five, I suppose I was as close to that concept of myself as anyone.

In spite of her many years, grandmother was highly active in the village ceremonial setting. She was a member of an important women's society and attended every traditional function, taking me along to many of them. I'd wear one of my colorful shirts she made by hand for just such occasions. Grandmother taught me appropriate behavior at these events. Through modeling she showed me how to pray properly. Barefooted, I greeted the sun each morning with a handful of cornmeal. At night I'd look to the stars in wonderment and let a prayer slip through my

lips. On meeting someone, grandmother would say, "Smile and greet. Grunt if you must, but don't pretend they're not there." On food and material things, she would say, "There is enough for everyone to share and it all comes from above, my child." I learned to appreciate cooperation in nature and with my fellow men early in life. I felt very much a part of the world and our way of life. I knew I had a place in it, and I felt good about it.

And Then I Went to School

At age six, like the rest of the Cochiti six-year-olds that year, I had to begin my schooling. It was a new and bewildering experience — one I will not forget. The strange surrounding, new ideas about time and expectations, and the foreign tongue were at times overwhelming to us beginners. It took some effort to return the second day and many times thereafter.

To begin with, unlike my grandmother, the teacher did not have pretty brown skin and a colorful dress. She wasn't plump and friendly. Her clothes were of one color and drab. Her pale and skinny form made me worry that she was very ill. In the village, being more pale than usual was a sure sign of an oncoming fever or some such disorder. I thought that explained why she didn't have time just for me and the disappointed looks and orders she seemed always to direct my way. I didn't think she was so smart since she couldn't understand my language. "Surely that was why we had to leave our 'Indian' at home." But then I didn't feel so bright either. All I could say in her language was "Yes teacher," "My name is Joseph Henry," and "When is lunch?" The teacher's odor took some getting used to also. In fact, many times it made me sick right before lunch. Later I learned from the girls this smell was something she wore called perfume.

An Artificial Classroom

The classroom, too, had its odd characteristics. It was terribly huge and smelled of medicine like the village clinic I feared so much. The walls and ceiling were artificial and uncaring. They were too far from me and I felt naked. Those fluorescent light tubes made an eerie drone and blinked suspiciously over me, quite a contrast to the fire and sunlight my eyes were accustomed to. I thought maybe the lighting did not seem right because it was man-made, and it wasn't natural. Our confinement to rows of desks was another unnatural demand made on our active little bodies. We had to sit at these hard things for what seemed like forever before relief (recess) came midway through the morning and afternoon. Running carefree in the village and fields was but a sweet memory of days gone by. We all went home for lunch since we lived a short walk from school. It took coaxing, and sometimes bribing, to get me to return and complete the remainder of the school day.

School was a painful experience during those early years. The English language and the new set of values caused me much anxiety and embarrassment. I couldn't comprehend everything that was happening, but I could understand very well when I messed up or wasn't doing so well. Negative messages were communicated too effectively and I became more and more unsure of myself. How I wished I could understand other things in school just as well.

The conflict was not only in school performance but in many other areas of my life as well. For example, many of us students had a problem with head lice due to the "unsanitary conditions in our homes." Consequently, we received a harsh shampooing which was rough on both the scalp and the ego. Cleanliness was crucial, and a washing of this sort indicated to the class that one came from a home setting which was not healthy. I recall one such treatment and afterwards being humiliated before my peers with a statement that I had "She'na" (lice) so tough that I must have been born with them. Needless to say, my Super Indian self-image was no longer intact.

"Leave Your Indian at Home"

My language, too, was questioned right from the beginning of my school career. "Leave your Indian at home!" was like a school trademark. Speaking it accidentally or otherwise was punishable by a dirty look or a whack with a ruler. This reprimand was for speaking the language of my people which meant so much to me. It was the language of my grandmother, and I spoke it well. With it, I sang beautiful songs and prayed from my heart. At that young and tender age, it was most difficult for me to comprehend why I had to part with my language. And yet at home I was encouraged to attend school so that I might have a better life in the future. I knew I had a good village life already, but this awareness dwindled each day I was in school.

As the weeks turned to months, I learned English more and more. It may appear that comprehension would be easier. It got easier to understand, all right. I understood that everything I had, and was a part of, was not nearly as good as the whiteman's. School was determined to undo me in everything

from my sheepskin bedding to the dances and ceremonies which I had learned to have faith in and cherish. One day I dozed off in class after a sacred all-night ceremony. I was startled awake by a sharp jerk on my ear, and informed coldly, "That ought to teach you to attend 'those things' again." Later, all alone, I cried. I couldn't understand why or what I was caught up in. I was receiving two very different messages; both were intended for my welfare.

Values in life style were dictated in various ways. The Dick and Jane reading series in the primary grades presented me pictures of a home with a pitched roof, straight walls, and sidewalks. I could not identify with these from my Pueblo world. However, it was clear I didn't have these things, and what I did have did not measure up. At night, long after grandmother went to sleep, I would lie awake staring at our crooked adobe walls casting uneven shadows from the light of the fireplace. The walls were no longer just

To me, the house was just right. Grandmother's affection completed the warmth and security I will always remember.

right for me. My life was no longer just right. I was ashamed of being who I was, and I wanted to change right then and there. Somehow it became very important to have straight walls, clean hair and teeth, and a spotted dog to chase after. I even became critical of, and hateful toward, my bony, fleabag of a dog. I loved the familiar and cozy environment at grandmother's house, but now I imagined it could be a heck of a lot better if only I had a whiteman's house with a bed, a nice couch, and a clock. In school books, all the child characters ever did was run at leisure after the dog or kite. They were always happy. As for me, all I seemed to do at home was go for buckets of water and cut up sticks for a lousy fire. Didn't the teacher say drinking coffee would stunt my growth? Why couldn't I have nice tall glasses of milk so I could have strong bones and white teeth like those kids in the books? Did my grandmother really care about my well being?

Torn Away

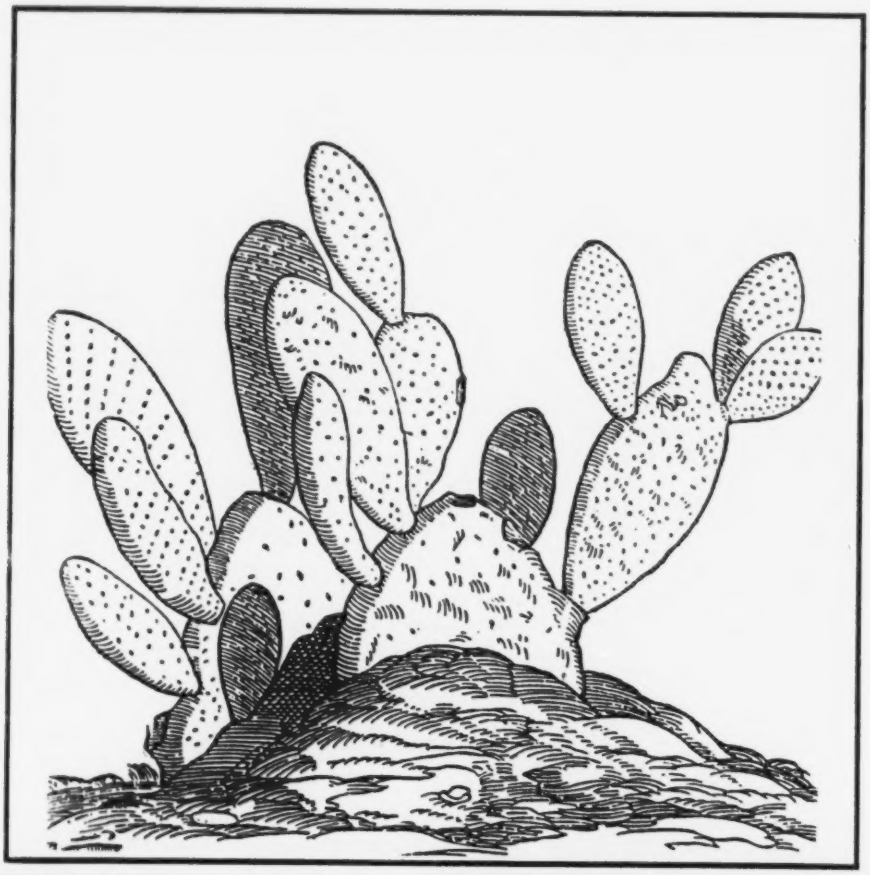
I had to leave my beloved village of Cochiti for my education beyond six. I left to attend a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding school thirty miles from home. Shined shoes and pressed shirt and pants were the order of the day. I managed to adjust to this just as I had to most of the things the school shoved at me or took away from me. Adjusting to leaving home and the village was tough enough. It seemed the older I got, the further I got from the ways I was so much a part of. Since my parents did not own an automobile, I saw them only once a month when they came in the community truck. They never failed to come supplied with "eats" for me. I enjoyed the outdoor oven bread, dried meat, and tamales they usually brought. It took a while to get accustomed to the diet of the school. Being in town with strange tribes under one roof was frightening and often very lonely. I longed for my grandmother and my younger brothers and sisters. I longed for my house. I longed to take part in a Buffalo Dance. I longed to be free.

I came home for the four-day Thanksgiving break. At first, home did not feel right anymore. It was much too small and stuffy. The lack of running water and bathroom facilities was too inconvenient. Everything got dusty so quickly, and hardly anyone spoke English. It occurred to me then that I was beginning to take on the whiteman's ways that belittled my own. However, it didn't take long to "get back with it." Once I reestablished my relationships with family, relatives, and friends, I knew I was where I came from. I knew where I belonged.

Leaving for the boarding school the following Sunday evening was one of the saddest events in my entire life. Although I had enjoyed myself immensely the last few days, I realized then that life would never be the same again. I could not turn back the time just as I could not do away with school and the ways of the whiteman. They were here to stay and would creep more and more into my life. The effort to make sense of both worlds together was painful, and I had no choice but to do so. The schools, television, automobiles, and many other outside ways and values had chipped away at the simple cooperative life I began to grow in. The people of Cochiti were changing. The winter evening gatherings, the exchanging of stories, and even the performing of certain ceremonies were already only a memory that someone commented about now and then. Still, the two worlds were very different and the demands of both were ever present. The whiteman's was flashy, less personal, but very comfortable. The Cochiti were both attracted and pushed toward these new ways which they had little to say about. There was no choice left but to compete with the whiteman on his terms for survival. To do that I knew I had to give up part of my life.

Negative messages were communicated too effectively and I became more and more unsure of myself.

Determined not to cry, I left my home that dreadfully lonely night. As I made my way back to school, my right hand clutched tightly the mound of cornmeal grandmother had placed there and my left hand brushed away a tear. ❐



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The Delight Song of Tsoai-Talee

By N. Scott Momaday

I am a feather in the bright sky.
I am the blue horse that runs in the plain.
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water.
I am the shadow that follows a child.
I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows.
I am an eagle playing with the wind.
I am a cluster of bright beads.
I am the farthest star.
I am the cold of the dawn.
I am the roaring of the rain.
I am the glitter on the crust of the snow.
I am the long track of the moon in a lake.
I am a flame of the four colors.
I am a deer standing way in the dusk.
I am a field of sumac and the poome blanche.
I am an angle of geese upon the winter sky.
I am the hunger of a young wolf.
I am the whole dream of these things.

You see, I am alive, I am alive.
I stand in good relation to the earth.
I stand in good relation to the gods.
I stand in good relation to all that is beautiful.
I stand in good relation to the daughter of Tsen-tainte.
You see, I am alive, I am alive.

— *From* An Angle of Geese

SECONDARY SCHOOL ISSUES

Talking Back to Columbus:

Teaching for Justice and Hope

By Bill Bigelow

"Of course, the writers of the books [that hide the truth or lie about Columbus] probably think it's harmless enough—what does it matter who discovered America, really, and besides it makes them feel good about America. But the thought that I have been lied to all my life about this, and who knows what else, really makes me angry."

Rebecca's written reaction to textbook accounts of Columbus's "discovery" hints that, in fact, the truth may not always set us free.(1) Often it makes us angry — and that anger can all too easily lead to cynicism.

Over the years, I've tried to find ways to tell the truth about history so that students leave feeling more hopeful and powerful than when we began. I aim to turn my classes into communities of resistance and courage, hope and possibility: I encourage students to "talk back" to the history and to the history writers; I prompt students to give voice to the social groups silenced in the traditional curriculum; I highlight historical episodes of struggle for social change and try to relate those movements to the present day; I provide opportunities for students to see themselves as activists for justice; and I ask students to draw on their own lives as a source of hope and wisdom about resistance to injustice. These are lofty goals and I'd be less than honest if I didn't admit that results are sometimes ambiguous.

Trying Out New Values

In *Annie John*, a novel by Jamaica Kincaid about a young black woman's coming of age on the Caribbean island of Antigua, Annie "talks back" to history by defacing her school book's chapter on Christopher Columbus.(2) Annie dislikes Columbus, representing as he does the colonization of the West Indies and the initiation of the Atlantic slave trade. So in her textbook, under a picture of Columbus being transported in chains back to Spain during his third voyage, Annie writes in large letters: "The Great Man Can No Longer Just Get Up and Go."

It's probably not a good idea to encourage students to scribble critical commentary in the pages of history books like Annie did. But we *can* encourage them to write critiques of Columbus and his worldview. In my U.S. history class, students read numerous excerpts from Native oratory and poetry which reveal a different way of viewing the living world than that of the European conquerors. Whether Shawnee — "Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?" — or Lakota — "Every seed is awakened and so has all animal life. It is through this mysterious power that we too have our being and we therefore yield to our neighbors, even our animal neighbors, the same right as ourselves, to inhabit this land" — the first Americans share a common understanding of the web of life.(3)

I ask students to step inside this worldview and talk back to the materialistic and exploitative values imported to the Americas by Columbus and those who followed. Though I never limit them to working from my suggestions, I provide quotes the students may respond to: "Gold is a wonderful thing! Whoever owns it is lord of all he wants. With gold it is even possible to open for souls the way to paradise," Columbus wrote in a letter to Isabella and Ferdinand in 1503.(4) And another, from Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation, who, in sharp contrast to the Indians, saw the American landscape as "a hideous and desolate wilderness full of wild beasts and wild men."(5) My student Kimberly Stubbs, then a sophomore, adopted the persona of a Plains Indian and wrote a stinging rebuttal to the kind of arrogance she saw in the Columbus quotation:

What is gold
when the buffalo's thunder
is stilled, the earth
no longer drummed by mud-hard hooves?...
What is gold
when grass turns brown
when cold, cold wind blows ice
through tents and houses
and there's no more buckskin
no fur to bring warmth
no wood for fire,
for all the trees have died?
With gold it is even possible
to open for souls
the way to paradise,
but I say that way is death,
and gold the destroyer of life.

Kim's poem longs for life pursuits that don't "destroy life." While her piece does not provide a blueprint for social transformation, the talking-back assignment allowed her to give voice to a humane and environmentally respectful value system. I hope that once students have "tried on" new ways of understanding the world, they are more able to incorporate aspects of those world views that make sense to them.

Giving Voice to the Taínos

Students might be encouraged to rearrange the assignment and complete it from the standpoint of Christopher Columbus. In his extraordinary book, *The Harp and the Shadow*, Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier writes from the perspective of Columbus, alone on the verge of death, awaiting his confessor. Sometimes haughty and combative, sometimes probing and self critical, Carpentier's Columbus can be excerpted as a prompt for students' writing. In a death-bed interior monologue, Columbus thinks back to his first contact with the people he called Indians.

[They] wore small bits of gold in their noses. I said: GOLD. Seeing this marvel, I felt a sort of internal shock. A lust the likes of which I had never known rumbled in my gut. My hands trembled. Shaken, sweating, determined, crazed, peppering these men with sign-language questions, I tried to find out about the source of the gold, how they had obtained it, where it was found, how it was mined...(6)

In a later passage, Carpentier's Columbus describes reactions to Spanish society of the lone Taíno remaining in captivity from Columbus's first voyage:

From Diegito, the only one left, I knew that these men neither liked nor admired us: they

thought we were treacherous, lying, violent, hot-tempered, cruel, dirty, and foul-smelling, since we almost never bathed, unlike them, who freshened their bodies several times a day in the rivers, streams, and waterfalls of their land. They said our houses stank of rancid grease; ... our finest horsemen of armpits; and that if our ladies wore so many bodices and ruffles and ribbons, it must be to hide some repulsive deformity or sore... Our perfumes and scented oils — and even incense — make them sneeze; they choke in our narrow rooms; and they think our churches are places of pain and panic because of the many filthy, crippled, pathetic dwarfs and monsters who clog their entrances. They can't understand why so many men who are not part of an army go about armed, nor how so many richly dressed women on dazzling horses can look down without shame on the perpetual grieving demonstration of misery and purulence, of amputees and beggars in rags...(7)

Obviously, some students may want to shun Columbus, or anyone else, as mediator and simply let the Taínos speak for themselves. However, these excerpts can provide models of exploring indigenous perspectives and talking back to the silences.

In a long illustrated poem, "Christopher's Fall From Grace," Jefferson student Rachel Drown depicts the unequal dialogue between Columbus and Taínos. Through verse, the cultures speak to each other:

...No welcome can we give to you,
our souls you cannot steal.
You've taken all we have by force,
as your fate you try to seal.
We have no more gold, we have no more pride,
We have no more carefree days.
Too many we love are dead or gone
and we fear there are more on the way.

Salutations lowly slaves,
I see you all look sad
You'll join your friends if you find no gold
or in any way make me mad.
I've taken your loved ones back to Spain,
to serve rich noble men.
I need more gold or I'll make slaves,
of all your kith and kin.

Unwelcome is the mortal man,
through heaven's pearly gates,
who lies and steals and kills his own,
with greed and lust and hate.
You cannot harm us anymore,
or use us for your gain.
And long after your memory fades,
our spirits will remain.

Credit: Impact Visuals

A Miskito woman of Nicaragua celebrates the struggle for autonomy.

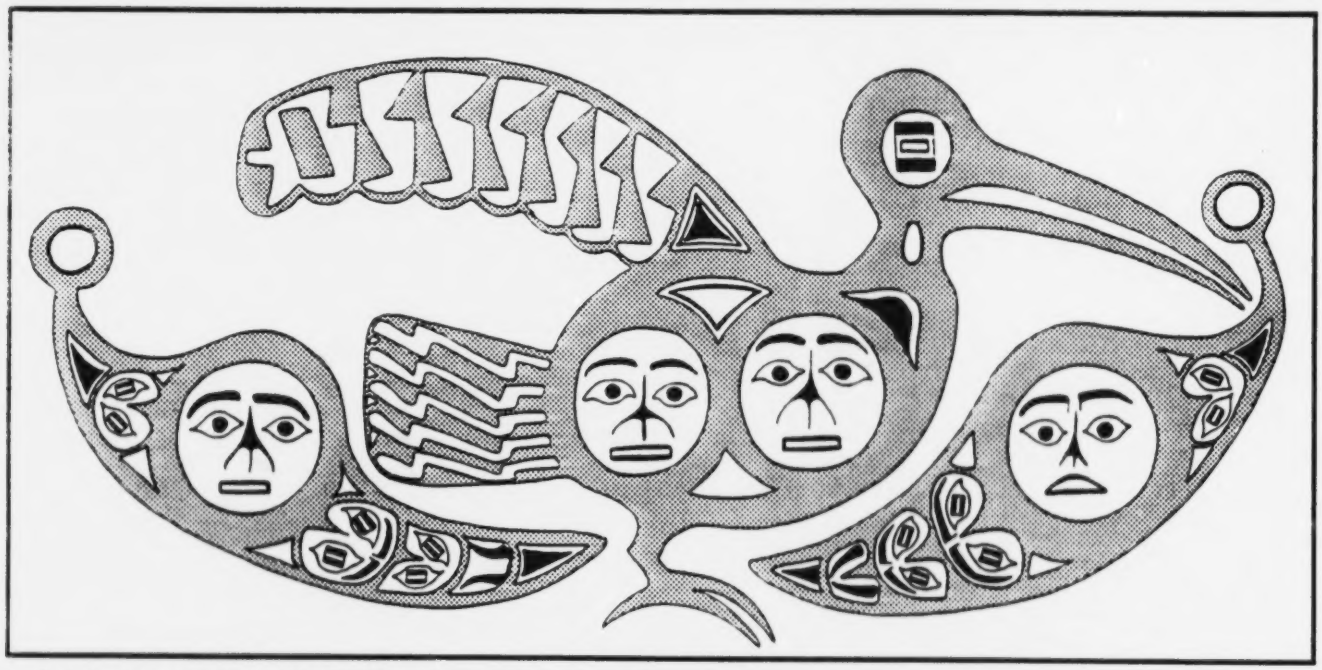
You became an evil man,
Amidst your lust for gold.
But all the wealth within the world,
won't save your tarnished soul.

Rachel's Taínos "resist" Columbus and crew by maintaining their humanity in the face of his kidnapping, slavery and extortion. The last drawing accompanying her poem portrays Taínos with their hands linked and thrust in the air — spiritually triumphant even in their extermination. That this resistance of the soul is the only fight the Taínos offer probably indicates that I didn't do an adequate job teaching the varieties of Caribbean Indians' flesh and blood struggles.

Students can also find hope by learning about other people who fought for what they thought was right. Our curriculum needs to feature movements for social justice — against slavery and imperialism, for workers' rights, for women's liberation — as well as individuals who joined and led these movements — Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, Eugene Debs, Margaret Sanger, Cesar Chavez. In that way, the link between injustice and people's capacity to resist becomes for students a "habit of the mind."

By deemphasizing native resistance to Columbus and those who came after, I unintentionally encouraged students to view Indians as objects, passively awaiting their final fate at the hands of Columbus. The Taínos in Rachel's poem thumb their noses at Columbus, but only as they die. Indeed, as the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas and other contemporaneous chronicles record, many Indians did commit suicide, but also left a rich legacy of resistance.

From the beginning of the European con-



Painted design from the Northwest Coast, representing the Raven.

quest, Native Americans stood up for themselves in myriad ways. On Monday, October 15, 1492, just three days after his arrival on Guanahaní, Columbus writes in his journal that some of the people he had earlier kidnapped were attempting to mislead him in order to escape: "...all that [my captives] said was a ruse in order to get away."(8) Sure enough, that same day, two of the Indians he'd kidnapped threw themselves overboard and escaped with the help of Indians in canoes. Columbus's men searched for the escapees on a nearby island but they "all ran off like chickens," Columbus writes.(9)

But Indians didn't just run away. As the Spaniards began to reveal the exploitation and brutality inherent in La Empresa — the Enterprise -- the Indians also attacked. The men Columbus left behind at La Navidad on Hispaniola after his first voyage formed "a gang that roved the island in search of more gold and women."(10) Later reports indicated that each of the Spaniards had taken four or five Indian women as concubines. The Indian cacique (leader), Caonabó, led a mission against members of the gang, killed them and "promptly descended on Navidad with a strong force to wipe out the source of trouble."(11) Caonabó's raiders attacked Spaniards in their camps, killing some and chasing others into the sea where they were drowned. "The others wandering about the interior were killed off by the Indians whom they had robbed or otherwise wronged."(12)

Even in death, the Indians refused to bow to the will of the conquerors. In the first volume of his trilogy, *Memory of Fire*, Eduardo Galeano reconstructs the defiant conduct of Hatuey, an Indian cacique in the Guahaba region of Hispaniola, after his capture by the Spaniards:

They tie him to a stake.

Before lighting the fire that will reduce him to charcoal and ash, the priest promises him glory and eternal rest if he agrees to be baptized. Hatuey asks: "Are there Christians in that heaven?"

"Yes."

Hatuey chooses hell, and the firewood begins to crackle.(13)

These and dozens of other instances of indigenous resistance can be shared with students. The purpose is never to glorify violence, but to underscore people's capacity to stand up for their rights even against tremendous odds.

Students should also realize that not all Spaniards participated in the orgy of killing and plunder. I use the story of the Dominican friar, Antonio de Montesinos, who on the Sunday before Christmas in 1511 delivered the first sermon in the Americas attacking the enslavement and murder of Indians [see "The Spanish Fight for Justice in the Indies, p. 82.] Montesinos' congregation that day included all the royal officials of Santo Domingo, including the Admiral Diego Columbus, son of Christopher Columbus. Montesinos scolded them, saying that their conscience was "sterile like the desert" and warned them the voice of Christ "says that you are living in deadly sin for the atrocities you tyrannically impose on these innocent people [the Indians.] Tell me, what right have you to enslave them?"(14)

This unprecedented attack didn't sit well with the colonial elite. After complaints to the King, Montesinos was forced to travel to Spain to defend himself and his "scandalous" remarks. Unfortunately, the Dominicans' protest led not to a withdrawal from Indian land but to the 1512 Laws of Burgos, a package of viciously racist and paternalistic statutes which, while offering some paper protections for Indians, foretold the almost complete destruction of native cultures in the Americas. Indians' villages were to be burned "so that they might lose the longing to return to them, although in the removal violence should not be used but much gentleness."(15) Indians were forced to work on farms and in mines, though they were to be paid for their labor. Overall, the new laws dictated Spain's version of a Christian life for the Indians, from the kind of clothes they should wear to the kind of food they should eat.

While I hope students will draw inspiration from these church people's courage and tenacity, I also want them to approach the ecclesiastic resistance critically. Although Montesinos' sermons were brave and angry, they also contained an attitude of we-know-what's-best-for-the-Indians.

When possible, I try to bring struggles for justice up to the present, so as not to leave

resistance back in history, lying there like a corpse. A few years ago, my teaching partner in a literature and history class, Linda Christensen, and I decided to acquaint students with the fight for native fishing rights on the Columbia River. David SoHappy and 12 other Native Americans had recently been arrested for poaching salmon, even though a treaty signed in 1855 grants Indians perpetual rights to fish at all the "usual and accustomed places" — as Native peoples along the Columbia had been doing for the last 12,000 years or more.

We read Craig Lesley's *Winterkill*(16), a novel about a Nez Perce and his son, and articles about David SoHappy's struggle. We also role played the controversy over the building of the Dalles Dam in 1957, a dam which violated native treaty rights by drowning Celilo Falls, a sacred fishing ground and trading center. We invited a representative from the Columbia River Defense Committee to talk to the class and also took a field trip to the museum at The Dalles Dam. There we heard a talk from the Army Corps of Engineers (builders of the dam), and hiked along the banks of the river, where 3,000 year old native pictographs overlook the water below and Indians still fish from platforms fastened to the cliffs.

The museum is a Corps of Engineers house of propaganda. Native people are portrayed as relics from a distant past, associated solely with archaeological digs. The exhibit texts' passive and muddy prose hides any human responsibility for the sabotage of river Indians' lives. The museumspeak acknowledges that changes occurred, but masks the choices preceding these changes, who made them, and why. Linda and I encouraged students to take notes on the exhibits and through poetry and essay to write about the day.

Rebecca wrote in part:

...You learn how a lifestyle
can be bought and sold
You learn you can picnic
where ancestors of a culture
were once buried
And a white man's greed
means more than a red man's
survival...
You learn to sit back
and let progress progress

And Matthew wrote:

...I could hear the churning and growling
from deep inside the cold, windowless,
cement walls
and from the depths of the water
I could almost hear the chanting and
crying of Celilos
as they watched their fishing grounds
become as dead as their forefathers

Linda and I were proud parents of what had obviously been some powerful learning experiences for students. But in our class discussion to evaluate the study, Nikki said, "Why is it that we just kept talking *about* Indians, but we didn't actually get to meet any Indians? It couldn't be that hard to get on the phone and call Chief Johnny Jackson [of the Celilos] and see if he would come in to speak."

It wasn't the most gentle way to bring it up, but Nikki was right. Inadvertently, we had replicated the textbook and museum discourse that talks about native peoples in the third person — and in the process silences them and dumps them somewhere in the past. Without intending it, we reinforced the portrayal of Indian as Other, one of the very notions we so insistently criticized.

In years past, American Indian Movement representatives and members of local native organizations had spoken in my classes, but I underestimated the importance of this *personal* contact for students. The significance of the omission went beyond the error of reinforcing the Us and Them myth. In the face of such overwhelming and continuing injustice, students needed to meet people face to face who were working for change. Merely reading about these people and movements unnecessarily distanced students from the hope that comes from hearing actual voices say, "I believe we can make a difference."

That year, Linda and I asked students to create a project that would reach beyond the classroom walls to educate others in the school or larger community. We worried that unless we offered students a chance to act on their new learning, our teaching would unintentionally yet effectively tell students that their role is merely to uncover injustice, not to do anything about it.

Students as Activists

Students could choose the form of their projects. The only requirement was that each individual or group make a presentation outside the classroom. They took us at our word. One group of musicians produced a raucous rock video about the damming of the Columbia River at The Dalles Dam. Another group choreographed and performed a dance for other classes, at the same time bitter and humorous, on Columbus's "discovery" and search for gold. As some students danced/acted, one recited quotes from Columbus. Several students interviewed local Northwest Indian tribal leaders about their struggle for fishing rights, and produced a videotape, subsequently broadcast over the school's closed-circuit TV news show.

One young woman, Nicole Smith-Leary, wrote and illustrated a children's book, *Chris*. In Nicole's story, a young boy named Christopher moves from his old Spain Street neighborhood to a new house on Salvadora Street. He's miserable and misses his old friends, Ferdie and Isie. While wandering the new neighborhood he spots a colorful playhouse and declares, "I claim this clubhouse in the name of me, and my best friends Ferdie and Isie." The rightful owners of the clubhouse soon return and confront Christopher, who insists that the structure is now *his* because he "discovered" it.

"How can you come here and discover something that we built and really care about?" the boys demand.

The story ends happily when they agree to let Christopher share the clubhouse if he helps with the upkeep — a metaphorical twist that would have been nice 500 years earlier.

Nicole read her story in a number of classes at a local elementary school. She opened each session by asking if anyone had something to write with. When an unsuspecting youngster volunteered a pencil, Nicole thanked the student, then pocketed it. This elementary school version of purse-stealing (see "Discovering Columbus: Re-reading the Past," p. 6) gave Nicole a handy introduction to the theft-posing-as-discovery lesson in her short story.

Like Rebecca and many other students, Nicole was angry she had been lied to about Columbus and the genocide of indigenous people in the Caribbean. However, the final project assignment encouraged her to channel that anger in an activist direction. She became a teacher, offering the youngsters a framework in which to locate and question the romanticized textbook patter about "exploration" and "discovery." Nicole's story and lesson provided a kind of revenge: getting back at those who mis-educated her so many years before. But as she taught she also learned — learned that the best way to address injustice is to work for change.

Because Nicole's book functioned as such a wonderful model, I've encouraged students in subsequent years to use this form to talk back to history. For those who choose the metaphorical path blazed by Nicole, their stories assert that yes, people can share and cooperate, implicitly arguing that there are alternative models of social organization to the one based on exploitation and violence practiced by Columbus and the colonialists who came after.

Credit: Akwesasne Notes

The Coast-to-Coast Longest Walk for Indian Rights in 1978.

In "Chris and the Cherry Tree," Stephanie Clay sees justice coming only from collective resistance. Every week, Christopher's mother asks him to pick cherries so she can make cherry pie. Lazy Christopher forces several little neighborhood boys to pick cherries for him.

"Fill this bag up with cherries or I will take your picnic food and lunch money," he threatens.

In a playful, but also serious way, Stephanie captures the extortion central to Columbus's Enterprise: "Christopher reached for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and ate it to let the boys know he meant business." The exploitation continues until one afternoon Christopher returns to find his little workers missing. Suddenly, the boys jump out of the tree and pelt Christopher with cherries. Christopher runs home to his mother, never to bother the boys again. (In his *History of the Indies*, Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas describes Taínos, forced to work in the Spaniards' mines, picking up the only weapons they had, stones, to throw at heavily armed soldiers.(17))

Hearing Silent Voices

Nicole and Stephanie's stories denounce injustice but they also imagine alternatives: through discussion, through sharing, and yes, through resistance, we can live better. It's more than just wishing history had come out differently, though it certainly is that as well. History is not destiny, their stories assert. And through envisioning ourselves as subjects of a better world, we help play a small part in bringing it about.

In a discussion about the U.S. media at the height of the Gulf War, my student Sekou Crawford said, "It's just like with Columbus. The textbooks all told the story from his point of view, from the winners' point of view. They called it a discovery instead of an invasion. The only story we get now is from the bombers' point of view. We hardly hear anything from the victims."

However one felt about the war, Sekou's point couldn't be denied: nightly newscasts were dominated by U.S. military spokespeople and images from "our" side.

Sekou had begun to "hear" the silence and linked the wartime muzzling of the bomb victims to the absence of an indigenous perspective in most teachings of Columbus. Through our critical reading of textbooks and children's books, beginning with Columbus, my students are introduced to the idea that language takes sides. They see how books on Columbus and the "discovery" highlight certain ways of understanding reality and silence other perspectives. Thus, a number of students decide to give voice to what they imagine to be Native American perspectives in their children's books.

Tina Thomas wrote "The Untold Story" (see p. 32) recounting the tale of discovery from the point of view of the "discovered." Tina describes the joy of building a culture "from dirt and rock." Because their narrative doesn't sail breezily along with Columbus and crew, their description of first encounter is different than any commercially published book I've ever seen: "These people were not like us. Their skin was pink, their hair the color of sand, and their eyes the color of the open sea. They wore strange items that covered their bodies, even though it was very hot." Eventually, Columbus takes slaves and kills many others. Unlike the traditional stories, Tina refuses to end her tale happily ever after: "We have little to show our children as proof of what happened to the Taínos. But we have our stories, told from generation to generation."

Listening for "untold stories" begins with the Columbus tale, but is more than just the first chapter of a quest for historical accuracy. For students, learning to recognize that those in power privilege the voices of the powerful over the powerless is a basic skill. In most textbooks, in most movies, on most TV sets, the real life struggles and accomplishments of the majority of people are as absent as the Taínos are from Columbus books. Working class children, children of color, young women — all students not born with silver spoons in their mouths — can begin to reclaim their own histories once they begin to look for what is missing as well as for what is there.

"Legacy of Defiance"

Finally, I want students to look at their *own* lives, so as to locate a personal "legacy of defiance"(18) from which to draw hope — and wisdom. Linda and I ask students to think of times in their lives when they stood up for what they felt was right. It might be a time they physically confronted a perpetrator of injustice, or simply a time they "talked back" to someone in authority. To help prompt students' memories of resistance, we give examples from each of our lives — times we stood up to overbearing administrators, challenged friends who were treating someone unfairly, or demonstrated against unjust laws or policies.

After brainstorming and prodding each other's memories, students choose an incident and write a story about it. In our discussion circle the next day, students read their stories to the group, piecing together an inspiring patchwork quilt of caring and determination. As a kindergartner, Marnie implored her mother to remove her from a school where the teachers frequently beat students. Aashish joined a team protest to defy a rule requiring a minimum height for soccer players that discriminated against East Indians. Amanda challenged a friend who called a gay student a "fag." Felicia refused her boyfriend's demand to prove her love by having his baby — "I walked up in his face and told him that I was tired of him running the relationship." Sara angrily confronted a group of girls who taunted their Mexican classmates with racist comments — "Yes, I'm proud of being a damn spic, as you white people say it. But you have no right telling us that. We have rights just like everybody else."

One of our aims is for students to remind each other that, "Yeah, I'm the kind of person who stands up for myself, who believes in doing the right thing." During the read-arounds, there is often a palpable aura of dignity and solidarity that settles over the classroom. Our hope is to nurture the beginnings of this community of justice and courage. But we also see the read-arounds as building a "collective text" of student experience to be probed for deeper social meaning.(19) As we saw from the Dominicans' experience on Hispaniola, righteous defiance is important but ultimately insufficient to achieve justice. We celebrate resistance, but we should also evaluate it.

Linda and I ask students to take notes on each other's story, to listen for: 1) What conditions allowed us to stand up for ourselves or others? 2) Was the resistance effective in rooting out the *causes* of injustice? 3) How were we changed by our acts of defiance? and 4) What other patterns did we notice as we listened to the papers? After our read-around, in which students call on each other to praise and comment on the stories, we ask them to write for a few minutes on the questions as preparation for discussion.

Some people, like Maryanne, notice that at times people fail to look for allies: "It was interesting to me that in most of these incidents people stood alone with the exception of Sonia." Kurzel agreed: "It seems to me that most of the class stood alone and against people they knew, like Chrissy and her uncle, Millshane and her aunt, Rita and her teacher, me and my teacher. In some cases they should have stood as a people instead of their self, and as far as results nothing really happened." And Jeff noticed that "there were some cases where people tried to use anger, but could of done something else instead of using cuss words and their fist."

Students' celebration of resistance is often tempered with the realization that the way we stand up for ourselves can be needlessly individualistic or violent. On the other hand, when I told one class that it didn't appear students' physical fights did much good and that talking might have gotten them further, Kevin seemed to speak for the majority, saying, "Nah, that talking stuff don't work anymore."

While most students begin to sense the limitations and contradictions of their actions, they almost always come away with a greater appreciation of their capacities to make a difference — and with more respect for each other. Heather commented that "standing up showed these people they have power over their lives and power to protect themselves." Scott wrote that hearing people's stories "showed us that we can achieve things if we stand up for ourselves. We all felt better about ourselves." Keely noticed that even though people often stood alone, the experience was much more satisfying when they fought for change together: "I think people enjoy doing something together rather than alone. It seems in today's world people would rather accomplish some feat on their own. So they're the one on top. But I really believe when something is successful, it's better to have someone to celebrate with. When you do something alone it's like you are doing it for yourself, but when other people are involved, you did it for each other."

But Christie understood the issue differently and underscored one's *individual* responsibility to confront wrongdoing: "I got out of this assignment that you have to be the one who stop the pain. If you don't say anything about your feelings people will always run over them."

The Columbus myth teaches children to accept racism as normal, to believe that powerful, rich, white, Christian countries have the right to dominate people of color in the Third World. It encourages people to listen for the perspectives of the winners, the social elites, and inures them to the historical and literary silences of everybody else. And it's a male myth of conquest: leave women and community behind; encounter shortsighted or naive people; convert, trick or overpower them — just pursue your dream, preferably of wealth and fame.

"I think people enjoy doing something together rather than alone."

No curricular task can be more important or challenging than encouraging students to deconstruct this extraordinarily powerful social myth. In numerous ways, we can invite students to "talk back" to Columbus and all he symbolizes, ever vigilant to guard against anger becoming despair. Our overriding concern must be to engage young people in activities that reveal their power to build a society of equality and justice. Children's hope is a fragile thing. ❐

Notes

1. See "Discovering Columbus: Rereading the Past, in this issue, p. 5.

2. Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*, New American Library, New York, 1983. See Chapter five, "Columbus in Chains," pp. 72-84.

3. Quotes from Frederick W. Turner III, ed., *North American Indian Reader*, The Viking Press, New York, 1973, pp. 246-255, respectively. The first quote is taken from a protest to Indiana Territory Governor William Henry Harrison by Tecumseh, denouncing the sale of Indian land. The second is from Tatanka Iotanka (Sitting Bull) responding to the U.S. government's violation of an 1868 treaty.

4. Cited in Bruce Johansen and Roberto Maestas, *Wasi'chu: The Continuing Indians Wars*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1979, p. 16.

5. Quoted in Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America*, Prentiss-Hall, New Jersey, 1974, p. 83.

6. Alejo Carpentier, *The Harp and the Shadow*, Mercury House, San Francisco, 1990, p. 84. Not all the fictional treatments of Columbus are useful. For example, avoid Newton Frohlich's *1492* (St. Martin's, 1990) which is little more than an anti-Islamic polemic.

7. Carpentier, pp. 106-107.

8. Cecil Jane (trans.), *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, Bramhall House, New York, 1960, p. 29.

9. Jane, p. 29.

10. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Little, Brown and Co., 1942, p. 427.

11. Morison, p. 427.

12. Morison, p. 427.

13. Eduardo Galeano, *Memory of Fire: Genesis*, Pantheon, New York, 1985, p. 57.

14. Quoted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *History of the Indies* (trans. and ed. by Andree Collard), Harper and Row, New York, 1971, p. 184.

15. Quoted in Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*, Little Brown and Co., Boston, 1965, p. 24.

16. Craig Lesley, *Winterkill*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1984.

17. Las Casas, p. 119.

18. Talking about her connection to her great grandmother, "a sharp-tongued woman," bell hooks writes that, "I claimed this legacy of defiance, of will, of courage, affirming my link to female ancestors who were bold and daring in their speech." bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, South End Press, Boston, 1989, p. 9.

19. See Linda Christensen, "Writing the Word and the World," *English Journal*, Feb. 1989, pp. 14-18; Christensen, "Teaching Standard English: Whose Standard?, *English Journal*, Feb 1990, pp. 36-40; and William Bigelow, "Inside the Classroom: Social Vision and Critical Pedagogy," *Teachers College Record*, Spring 1990, pp. 437-448.

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The Iroquois Contribution to the Constitution

Most Americans are aware of Native American contributions such as corn and tomatoes. Few realize that the U.S. Constitution also has roots in Native American culture, in particular the model of government developed by the Iroquois Confederacy of Nations. According to Jack Weatherford in his book *Indian Givers*, the Iroquois helped the colonists resolve a major dilemma: how could 13 sovereign and separate states be made into one country, without each one giving up its powers?

Following are excerpts from a Congressional Resolution passed by the House and Senate in 1988 which, among other issues, recognized the U.S. debt to the Iroquois Confederacy.

"Whereas the original framers of the Constitution, including, most notably, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, are known to have greatly admired the concepts of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy;

"Whereas the confederation of the original Thirteen Colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the Constitution itself;

"Be it resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that

(1) the Congress, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution, acknowledges the historical debt which this Republic of the United States of America owes to the Iroquois Confederacy and other Indian nations for their demonstration of enlightened, democratic principles of Government and their example of a free association of independent Indian nations."

For more information see Forgotten Founders, *by Bruce Johansen, Harvard Common Press, 1982.*

Loo-Wit*

By Wendy Rose

The way they do
this old woman
no longer cares
what we think
but spits
her black tobacco
any which way
stretching
full length
from her bumpy bed.
Finally up
she sprinkles
ash on the snow,
cold buttes
promise nothing
but the walk
of winter.
Centuries of cedar
have bound her
to earth,
huckleberry ropes
lay prickly
on her neck.
Around her
machinery growls,
snarls and ploughs
great patches of her skin
She crouches
in the north,
her trembling
the source
of dawn.

Light appears
with the shudder
of her slopes,
the movement
of her arm.
Blackberries unravel,
stones dislodge;
it's not as if
they were not warned.

She was sleeping
but she heard the boot scrape, the creaking floor,
felt the pull of the blanket
from her thin shoulder.
With one hand free she finds her
weapons
and raises them high; clearing the
twigs from her throat
she sings, she sings, shaking the
sky
like a blanket about her
Loo-wit sings and sings and sings!

**Loo-Wit, Woman of Fire*
(Cowlitz name for
Mount Saint Helens)

Bones of Contention

By Tony Hillerman

Through the doorway which led from her receptionist-secretary's office into her own, Catherine Morris Perry instantly noticed the box on her desk....

"Where'd that come from?" Catherine said, indicating the box.

"Federal Express," Markie said. "I signed for it."...

Catherine Morris Perry....opened, looked at the box, and made a wry face. She opened her desk drawer and extracted her letter opener. Then she buzzed Mrs. Bailey.

"Yes'um."

"Mrs. Bailey. When packages arrive like this, don't bring them in and put them on my desk. Open them and get the contents out."

"Okay," Mrs. Bailey said....

[Catherine Morris Perry] pulled open the top flaps. Under them was a copy of the *Washington Post*, folded to expose the story that had quoted her. Part of it was circled in black.

MUSEUM OFFERS COMPROMISE IN OLD BONE CONTROVERSY

The headline irritated Catherine. There had been no compromise. She had simply stated the museum's policy. If an Indian tribe wanted ancestral bones returned, it had only to ask for them and provide some acceptable proof that the bones in question had indeed been taken from a burial ground of the tribe. The entire argument was ridiculous and demeaning. In fact, even dealing with that Highhawk man was demeaning. Him and his Paho Society. A museum underling and an organization which, as far as anybody knew, existed only in his imagination. And only to create trouble. She glanced at the circled paragraph.

"Mrs. Catherine Perry, an attorney for the museum and its spokesperson on this issue, said the demand by the Paho Society for the reburial of the museum's entire collection of more than 18,000 Native American skeletons was 'simply not possible in light of the museum's purpose.'

"She said the museum is a research institution as well as a gallery for public display, and that the museum's collection of ancient human bones is a potentially important source of anthropological information. She said that Mr. Highhawk's suggestion that the museum make plaster casts of the skeletons and rebury the originals was not practical 'both because of research needs and because the public has the right to expect authenticity and not be shown mere reproductions.'"

The clause "the right to expect authenticity" was underlined. Catherine Morris Perry frowned at it, sensing criticism. She picked up the newspaper. Under it, atop a sheet of brown wrapping paper, lay an envelope. Her name had been written neatly on it. She opened it and pulled out a single sheet of typing paper. While she read, her idle hand was pulling away the layer of wrapping paper which had separated the envelope from the contents of the box.

Dear Mrs. Perry:

You won't bury the bones of our ancestors because you say the public has the right to expect authenticity in the museum when it comes to look at skeletons. Therefore I am sending you a couple of authentic skeletons of ancestors. I went to the cemetery in the woods behind the Episcopal Church of Saint Luke. I used authentic anthropological methods to locate the burials of authentic white Anglo types —

Mrs. Morris Perry's fingers were under the wrapping paper now, feeling dirt, feeling smooth, cold surfaces.

"Mrs. Bailey!" she said. "Mrs. Bailey!" But her eyes moved to the end of the letter. It was signed "Henry Highhawk of the Bitter Water People."

"What?" Mrs. Bailey shouted. "What is it?"

—and to make sure they would be perfectly authentic, I chose two whose identities you can personally confirm yourself. I ask that you accept these two skeletons for authentic display to your clients and release the bones of two of my ancestors so that they may be returned to their rightful place in Mother Earth. The names of these two authentic —

Mrs. Bailey was standing beside her now. "Honey," she said. "What's wrong?"

Mrs. Bailey paused. "There's bones in that box," she said. "All dirty, too."

Mrs. Morris Perry put the letter on the desk and looked into the box. From underneath a clutter of what seemed to be arm and leg bones a single empty eye socket stared back at her. She noticed that Mrs. Bailey had picked up the letter. She noticed dirt. Damp ugly little clods had scattered on the polished desk top.

"My God," Mrs. Bailey said. "John Neldine Burgoyne. Jane Burgoyne. Weren't those — Aren't these your grandparents?" ❐

Excerpted from the novel Talking God *by Tony Hillerman. ©1989 by Tony Hillerman. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.*

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Three Thousand Dollar Death Song

By Wendy Rose

Nineteen American Indian Skeletons
from Nevada...valued at $3000...
— Museum invoice, 1975

Is it in cold hard cash? the kind
that dusts the insides of mens' pockets
lying silver-polished surface along the cloth.
Or in bills? papering the wallets of they
who threaten the night with dark words. Or
checks? paper promises weighing the same
as words spoken once on the other side
of the grown grass and dammed rivers
of history. However it goes, it goes
Through my body it goes
assessing each nerve, running its edges
along my arteries, planning ahead
for whose hands will rip me
into pieces of dusty red paper,
whose hands will smooth or smatter me
into traces of rubble. Invoiced now,
it's official how our bones are valued
that stretch out pointing to sunrise
or are flexed into one last foetal bend,
that are removed and tossed about,
catalogued, numbered with black ink
on newly-white foreheads.
As we were formed to the white soldiers' voice,
so we explode under white students' hands.
Death is a long trail of days
in our fleshless prison.

From this distant point we watch our bones
auctioned with our careful beadwork.
our quilled medicine bundles, even the bridles
of our shot-down horses. You: who have
priced us, you who have removed us: at what cost?
What price the pits where our bones share
a single bit of memory, how one century
turns our dead into specimens, our history
into dust, our survivors into clowns.

Our memory might be catching, you know;
picture the mortars, the arrowheads, the labrets
shaking off their labels like bears
suddenly awake to find the seasons have ended
while they slept. Watch them touch each other,
measure reality, march out the museum door!
Watch as they lift their faces
and smell about for us; watch our bones rise
to meet them and mount the horses once again!
The cost, then, will be paid
for our sweetgrass-smelling having-been
in clam shell beads and steatite,
dentalia and woodpecker scalp, turquoise
and copper, blood and oil, coal
and uranium, children, a universe
of stolen things.

— *From* That's What She Said

Spokane Museum

By Ramona Wilson

These are not relics
from lost people, lost lands.
I know where they are.
Give me that digging tool.
I'll show you where
in the spring we get roots.
The wind will come, as it does,
blowing our dresses and hair
as we bend with certainty,
the pink flowers in our hands,
the earth dropping
through our fingers.

Halfbreed Girl in the City School

By Jo Whitehorse Cochran

are you Mexican
are you Italian
are you Chinese
are you Japanese
spic wetback greaseball slant-eye
you are dark enough to question
you are light enough to ask
you have near black hair brown eyes
and speak slow-english
we are blonde blue eyed
and wear store bought sweaters skirts or pants
you are in homemade clothes out of style
we circle round you and your sister
you hug your sister close she's small and even darker
we kick we tug at braids and coats
we pull "I'm Indian!" out of you

the social worker wants
you to describe your family
she asks
does your father beat you
does your mother
does your father drink
does your mother
do you hate your parents
do you cry
tell me tell me do you
like the reservation better
are you ashamed in the classroom
when you wet your pants
why don't you speak up
why don't you get excused
why don't you go at recess
tell me tell me speak!

you stare out the window
turn an alphabet block in your hands
speak english speak english
the social worker caws
outside Canadian geese pass through your immediate sky
six in an arc going south
if you were a Changer like Star Boy
you could fly with those long-necks
but you must stay and look out this window

Grandma's words pound in your head
they want to strip us of our words
they want to take our tongues
so we forget how to talk to each other
you swallow the rock
that was your tongue
you swallow the song
that was your voice
you swallow you swallow
in the silence

— *From* Dancing on the Rim of the World

It is Important

By Gail Tremblay

On dark nights, when thoughts fly like nightbirds
looking for prey, it is important to remember
to bless with names every creature that comes
to mind; to sing a thankful song and hold
the magic of the whole creation close in the heart,
to watch light dance and know the sacred is alive.
On dark nights, when owls watch, their eyes
gleaming in the black expanse of starless sky,
it is important to gather the medicine bones,
the eagle feathers, the tobacco bundles, the braided
sweetgrass, the cedar, and the sage, and pray
the world will heal and breath feed the plants
that care for the nations keeping the circle whole.
On dark nights, when those who think only of themselves
conjure over stones and sing spells to feed their wills
it is important to give gifts and to love everything
that shows itself as good. It is time to turn
to the Great Mystery and know the Grandfathers have
mercy on us that we may help the people to survive.
On dark nights, when confusion makes those who envy
hate and curse the winds, face the four directions
and mumble names, it is important to stand
and see that our only work is to give what others
need, that everything that touches us is a holy
gift to teach us we are loved. When sun rises
and light surrounds life making blessings grow,
it is important to praise its coming, and exhale
letting all we hold inside our lungs travel east
and mix its power with the air; it is important to praise
dawn's power breathing in and know we live in good
relation to all creation and sing what must be sung.

— *From* Dancing on the Rim of the World

Credit: Impact Visuals

Native American Women In the Circle of Life

By Paula Gunn Allen

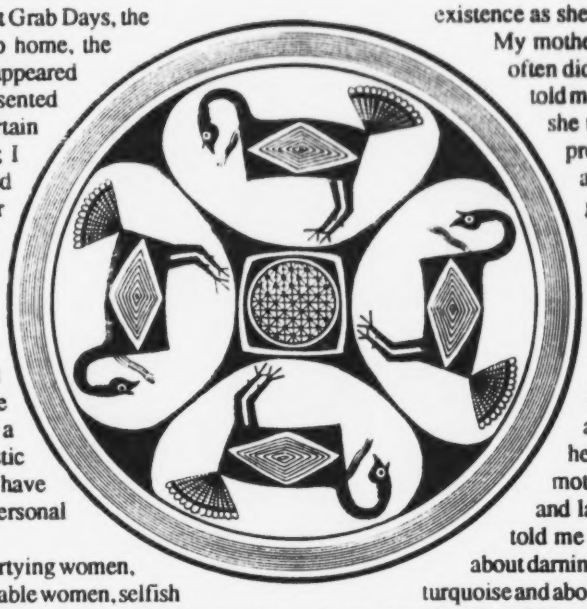
An American Indian woman is primarily defined by her tribal identity. In her eyes, her destiny is necessarily that of her people, and her sense of herself as a woman is first and foremost prescribed by her tribe. The definitions of woman's roles are as diverse as tribal cultures in the Americas. In some she is devalued, in others she wields considerable power. In some she is a familial/clan adjunct, in some she is as close to autonomous as her economic circumstances and psychological traits permit. But in no tribal definitions is she perceived in the same way as are women in Western industrial and post-industrial cultures.

In the West, few images of women form part of the cultural mythos, and these are largely sexually charged. Among Christians, the madonna is the female prototype, and she is portrayed as essentially passive; her contribution is simply that of birthing. Little else is attributed to her and she certainly possesses few of the characteristics that are attributed to mythic figures among Indian tribes. This image is countered (rather than balanced) by the witch-goddess/whore characteristics designed to reinforce cultural beliefs about women, as well as Western adversarial and dualistic perceptions of reality.

The tribes see women variously, but they do not question the power of femininity. Sometimes they see women as fearful, sometimes peaceful, sometimes omnipotent and omniscient, but they never portray women as mindless, helpless, simple, or oppressed. And while the women in a given tribe, clan, or band may be all these things, the individual woman is provided with a variety of images of women from the interconnected supernatural, natural, and social worlds she lives in.

As a half-breed American Indian woman, I cast about in my mind for negative images of Indian women, and I find none that are directed to Indian women alone. The negative images I do have are of Indians in general and in fact are more often of males than of females. All these images come to me from non-Indian sources, and they are always balanced by a positive image. My ideas of womanhood, passed on largely by my mother and grandmothers, Laguna Pueblo women, are about practicality, strength, reasonableness, intelligence, wit, and competence. I also remember vividly the women who came to my father's store, the women who held me and

sang to me, the women at Feast Day, at Grab Days, the women in the kitchen of my Cubero home, the women I grew up with; none of them appeared weak or helpless, none of them presented herself tentatively. I remember a certain reserve on those lovely brown faces; I remember the direct gaze of eyes framed by bright-colored shawls draped over their heads and cascading down their backs. I remember the clean cotton dresses and carefully pressed hand-embroidered aprons they always wore; I remember laughter and good food, especially the sweet bread and the oven bread they gave us. Nowhere in my mind is there a foolish woman, a dumb woman, a vain woman, or a plastic woman, though the Indian women I have known have shown a wide range of personal style and demeanor....



I have memories of tired women, partying women, stubborn women, sullen women, amicable women, selfish women, shy women, and aggressive women. Most of all I remember the women who laugh and scold and sit uncomplaining in the long sun on feast days and who cook wonderful food on wood stoves, in beehive mud ovens, and over open fires outdoors.

Images of Women

Among the images of women that come to me from various tribes as well as my own are White Buffalo Woman, who came to the Lakota long ago and brought them the religion of the Sacred Pipe which they still practice; Tinotzin the goddess who came to Juan Diego to remind him that she still walked the hills of her people and sent him with her message, her demand and her proof to the Catholic bishop in the city nearby. And from Laguna I take the images of Yellow Woman, Coyote Woman, Grandmother Spider (Spider Old Woman), who brought the light, who gave us weaving and medicine, who gave us life. Among the Keres she is known as Thought Woman who created us all and who keeps us in creation even now. I remember Iyatiku, Earth Woman, Corn Woman, who guides and counsels the people to peace and who welcomes us home when we cast off this coil of flesh as huskers cast off the leaves that wrap the corn. I remember Iyatiku's sister, Sun Woman, who held metals and cattle, pigs and sheep, highways and engines and so many things in her bundle, who went away to the east saying that one day she would return.

Since the coming of the Anglo-Europeans beginning in the 15th Century, the fragile web of identity that long held tribal people secure has gradually been weakened and torn. But the oral tradition has prevented the complete destruction of the web, the ultimate disruption of tribal ways. The oral tradition is vital; it heals itself and the tribal web by adapting to the flow of the present while never relinquishing its connection to the past. Its adaptability has always been required, as many generations have experienced. Certainly the modern American Indian woman bears slight resemblance to her forebears — at least on superficial examination — but she is still a tribal woman in her deepest being. Her tribal sense of relationships to all that is continues to flourish. And though she is at times beset by her knowledge of the enormous gap between the life she lives and the life she was raised to live, and while she adapts her mind and being to the circumstances of her present life, she does so in tribal ways, mending the tears in the web of being from which she takes her existence as she goes.

My mother told me stories all the time, though I often did not recognize them as that. My mother told me stories about cooking and childbearing; she told me stories about menstruation and pregnancy; she told me stories about gods and heroes, about fairies and elves, about goddesses and spirits; she told me stories about the land and the sky, about cats and dogs, about snakes and spiders; she told me stories about climbing trees and exploring the mesas; she told me stories about going to dances and getting married; she told me stories about dressing and undressing, about sleeping and waking; she told me stories about herself, about her mother, about her grandmother. She told me stories about grieving and laughing, about thinking and doing; she told me stories about school and about people; about darning and mending; she told me stories about turquoise and about gold; she told me European stories and Laguna stories; she told me Catholic stories and Presbyterian stories; she told me city stories and country stories; she told me political stories and religious stories. She told me stories about living and stories about dying. And in all of those stories she told who I was, who I was supposed to be, whom I came from, and who would follow me. In this way she taught me the meaning of the words she said, that all life is a circle and everything has a place within it. That's what she said and what she showed me in the things she did and the way she lives. ❐

The above is excerpted from The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Tradition. *Paula Gunn Allen, Laguna Pueblo/Sioux, is one of the foremost Native American literary critics.*

The Sacred Circle

"You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle. The sky is round and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were."

— Black Elk

Ceremony

By Leslie Marmon Silko

I will tell you something about stories,
[he said]
They aren't just entertainment.
Don't be fooled.
They are all we have, you see,
all we have to fight off
illness and death.

You don't have anything
if you don't have the stories.

Their evil is mighty
but it can't stand up to our stories.
So they try to destroy the stories
let the stories be confused or forgotten.
They would like that
They would be happy
Because we would be defenseless then.

He rubbed his belly.
I keep them here
[he said]
Here, put your hand on it
See, it is moving.
There is life here
for the people.

And in the belly of this story
the rituals and the ceremony
are still growing.

— From Ceremony

Unlearning Myths that Bind Us

Students Critique Stereotypes in Children's Stories and Films

By Linda Christensen

In this excerpt from a longer article, teacher Linda Christensen shows how many of the insidious social messages of the Columbus myth also inhabit children's stories and films. She indicates a number of ways to help students critically evaluate these biases.

I was nourished on the milk of American culture: I cleaned the dwarfs' house and waited for Prince Charming to bring me life; I swooned in Rhett Butler's arms — my waist as narrow and my bosom every bit as heaving as Scarlet's; I thrilled to the adventures of Swiss Family Robinson, whose tormentors were a swarthy hoard of Asians and Africans.

Our students suckle the same pap. The stereotypes and world view in these stories become accepted knowledge. Children learn that women are passive, men are strong, and people of color are either absent or evil.

As my student Omar wrote, "When we read children's books, we aren't just reading cute little stories, we are discovering the tools with which a young society is manipulated."

Children's books and movies instruct young people to accept the world as it is portrayed in these social blueprints. Children learn how to act, live and dream. Thus these tales, often peopled with ducks, mice and elephants, also inhibit students' ability to question the texts they read when they are older.

That's why we watch *The Little Mermaid* and read *The Ugly Duckling* in my high school English classes.

Cinderella

Exposing Myths

Too often, my high school students read novels, history texts, and the daily paper as if they were reading about a baseball game. They keep track of who's up, who's out, and the final score.

Many students don't know how to read. I don't mean they are illiterate. They can read the words. They can answer multiple choice questions about who said "to be or not to be." But they just "walk on the words," as Brazilian educator Paulo Freire says. They don't wrestle with the words and ideas presented. My goal, on the other hand, is to give students the tools to critique ideas that encourage or legitimate social inequality.

We begin by reading the preface and first chapter of Ariel Dorfman's book *The Empire's Old Clothes: What The Lone Ranger, Babar, and other innocent heroes do to our minds.*" I ask students to read Dorfman and keep track of their responses in a dialogue journal which consists of a paper folded in half from the top to the bottom. They quote or paraphrase Dorfman on the left side of the paper and argue, agree, or question him on the right. For example, Dorfman asserts:

"Industrially produced fiction has become one of the primary shapers of our emotions and our intellect in the 20th Century. Although these stories are supposed to merely entertain us, they constantly give us a secret education. We are not only taught certain styles of violence, the latest fashions, and sex roles by TV, movies, magazines, and comic strips; we are also taught how to succeed, how to love, how to buy, how to conquer,

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how to forget the past and suppress the future. We are taught more than anything else, how not to rebel (Dorfman, 1983, p. ix)."

I ask students if they agree with Dorfman's notion that children receive a "secret education." Do they remember incidents from their own childhood that support his allegations? This is difficult for some students. The dialogue journal spurs them to argue, to talk back, to create a conversation with the writer. Many don't want to believe they have been manipulated by children's books or advertising.

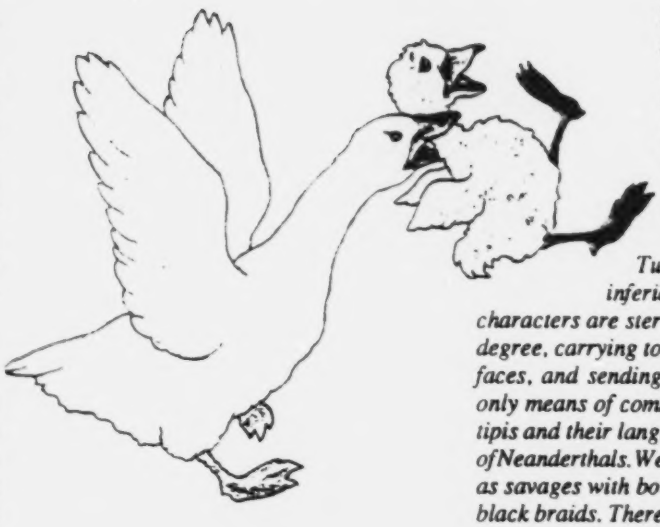
Dorfman's ideas bothered Justine, a senior in my Contemporary Literature and Society class a few years ago. In her dialogue journal she responded: "Personally, handling the dissection of dreams has been a major cause of depression for me. Not so much dissecting — but how I react to what is found as a result of the operation. It can be overwhelming and discouraging to find out my whole self image has been formed mostly by others or underneath my worries about what I look like is years (17 of them) of being exposed to TV images of girls and their set roles given to them by TV and the media. It's painful to deal with. The idea of not being completely responsible for how I feel about things today is scary. So why dissect the dreams? Why not stay ignorant about them and happy? The reason for me is that those dreams are not unrelated to my everyday life. They influence how I behave, think, react to things...My dreams keep me from dealing with an unpleasant reality."

Justine's dialogue with Dorfman shows her discomfort with prying apart her ideals, with discovering where she received her ideas. Yet she also grudgingly admitted she felt this process was necessary. Her discomfort might also have arisen from feeling incapable of changing herself or changing the standards by which she is judged in the larger society.

Justine's reaction is typical of many students. She was beginning to peel back the veneer covering some of the social injustices. She appreciated the importance of constructing a more liberatory set of possibilities for girls and women, but at the same time was overwhelmed by the task.

Charting Stereotypes

To help Justine and her classmates dismantle those old values and reconstruct more just ones, I have two goals when we study children's culture: first, to critique portrayals of hierarchy and inequality; second, to enlist students in imagining a better world, characterized by respect and equality.



The Ugly Duckling

We start by watching cartoons and children's movies such as Bugs Bunny, Popeye, Daffy Duck, Heckle and Jeckle, and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. On first viewing, students sometimes resist critical analysis. Kamaui said, "This is just a dumb little cartoon with some ducks running around in clothes."

Later they notice the absence of female characters in many cartoons. When women do appear, they look like Jessica Rabbit or Playboy centerfolds. We keep track of the appearance of people of color in classic children's movies — Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White. We look at the roles of women, men, people of color, and poor people. As they view each episode, they fill in a chart. Here is a partial sample from the ninth grade class evaluation of *The Little Mermaid*. (We also cover men's roles):

Women's Roles:

Ariel: Pretty, white, shapely, kind. Goal: Marry the prince.

Ursula: Fat, white, mean. Goals: Get back at Triton, power.

Maid: Chubby, confused, nice, white. Goals: Meals on time, clean clothes.

People of Color:

None, although Sebastian the crab is Jamaican and the court musician.

Poor People: Servants. No poor people have major roles.

After filling in a couple of charts, students write about the generalizations children might take away from these tales.

Both the freshmen and the seniors write critiques of the cartoons. Mira, a senior two years ago, attacked the racism in these Saturday morning rituals. Because of her familiarity with Native American cultures, her analysis was more developed:

Indians in Looney Tunes are also depicted as inferior human beings. These characters are stereotypical to the greatest degree, carrying tomahawks, painting their faces, and sending smoke signals as their only means of communication. They live in tipis and their language reminds the viewer of Neanderthals. We begin to imagine Indians as savages with bows and arrows and long black braids. There's no room in our minds for knowledge of the differences between tribes, like the Cherokee alphabet or Celilo salmon fishing.

A Black Cinderella?

Kenya, a freshman, scolded parents in her essay "A Black Cinderella? Give Me A Break."

"Have you ever seen a Black person, an Asian, a Hispanic in a cartoon? Did they have a leading role or were they a servant? What do you think this is doing to your child's mind?" She ended her piece, "Women who aren't White begin to feel left out and ugly because they never get to play the princess." She wasn't alone in her feelings. Sabrina W. wrote, "I'm not taking my kids to see any Walt Disney movies until they have a Black woman playing the leading role."

Although the students wanted the race of the actors changed, they didn't challenge the movies' underlying class or gender inequities.

Writing is a Vehicle for Change

For some students the cartoon unit exposes the wizardry that controls our dreams and desires — our self images. But others shrug their shoulders at this. It's okay for some people to be rich and others poor; they just want to see more rich people of color or more rich women. Or better yet, be rich themselves. They accept the inequalities in power and economic relationships.

Their acceptance teaches me the strength of these myths and how some students, in the absence of visions for a better world, need to believe in the fairy tale magic that will transform their lives.

Mira and her classmates wrote their most passionate essays of the year on this topic.

But venting their frustrations with cartoons — and even sharing it with their class — seemed a limited task. Yes, they could write articulate essays. Yes, they honed their arguments. Yes, they were both excited and dismayed by their discoveries.

But what was I teaching them if the lesson ended there? Ultimately, I was teaching that it was enough to be critical without taking action, that we could quietly rebel in the classroom, but we didn't really have to do anything about the problems we uncovered. Nor did we need to create anything to replace what we'd expelled. And those were not the lessons I intended. I wanted to develop their critical consciousness, but I also hoped to move them to action.

For some students — especially the seniors — the lesson didn't end in the classroom. Many say they can no longer enjoy most children's cartoon. Instead of seeing a bunch of ducks in clothes, they see the racism, sexism, and violence that swims under the surface. David told the class of coming home one day and finding his nephews absorbed in Looney Tunes. "I turned that TV off and took them down to the park to play," he said. "They aren't going to watch that mess while I'm around."

Radiance described how she went to buy Christmas presents for her niece and nephew. "Before, I would have just walked into the toy store and bought them what I knew they wanted — Nintendo or Barbie," she said. "But this time, I went up the clerk and said, 'I want a toy that isn't sexist or racist.'"

Students have also said that sexism and racism they saw in cartoons, they see in advertising, on prime time TV, on the news, in school. Now that they'd started analyzing cartoons, they couldn't stop analyzing the rest of the world. And sometimes they wanted to stop. As Justine wrote earlier, at times they would like to remain "ignorant and happy."

This year it became more evident than ever that if we stayed with critique and didn't move to action students might slump into cynicism.

Taking Action

To capture the passion and alleviate the pain, Tim Hardin, a fellow Jefferson English teacher, and I decided to get students out of the classroom with their anger — to allow their writing and learning to become vehicles for change. Instead of writing classroom essays, we asked this year's students to think of an audience for their analysis of cartoons. Most chose parents; a few chose their peers. Then they decided how they wanted to reach them. Some wanted to create a pamphlet which could be distributed at PTA meetings throughout the city. They graded each show A-F and wrote a brief summary of their findings:

DUCK TALES: At first glance the precocious ducks are cute, but look closer and see that the whole show is based on money. All their adventures revolve around finding money. Uncle Scrooge and the gang teach children that money is the only important thing in life. C-

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: Pizza eating Ninja Turtles. What's the point? There isn't any. The show is based on fighting the "bad guy," Shredder. Demonstrating no concern for the town people, they battle and fight, but never get hurt. This cartoon teaches a false sense of violence to kids: fight and you don't get hurt or solve problems through fists and swords instead of words. D

POPEYE: This show oozes with horrible messages from passive Olive Oyl to the hero "man" Popeye. This cartoon portrays ethnic groups as stupid. It is political also — teaching children that Americans are the best and conquer all others. F

On the back of the pamphlet, they listed tips for parents to select cartoons.

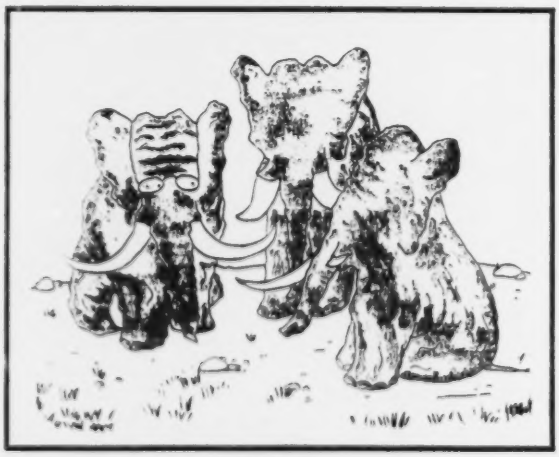
Most of the other students wrote articles they hoped to publish in various local and national newspapers or magazines. Catkin wrote about the sexual stereotyping and adoration of beauty in children's movies. Her article describes how she and other teenage women carry these messages with them still:

Women's roles in fairy tales distort reality — from Jessica Rabbit's six-mile strut in Who Framed Roger Rabbit? *to Tinkerbelle's obsessive vanity in* Peter Pan. *These seemingly innocent stories teach us to look for our faults. As Tinkerbelle inspects her tiny body in a mirror only to find that her minute hips are simply too huge, she shows us how to turn the mirror into an enemy...And this scenario is repeated in girls' locker rooms all over the world....Because we can never look like Cinderella, we begin to hate ourselves. The Barbie syndrome starts as we begin a lifelong search for the perfect body. Crash diets, fat phobias, and an obsession with the materialistic become commonplace. The belief that a product will make us rise above our competition, our friends, turns us into addicts. Our fix is that Calvin Klein push-up bra, Guess jeans, Chanel lipstick, and the latest in suede flats. We don't call it deception, we call it good taste. And soon it feels awkward going to the mailbox without makeup.*

In her essay, Lila recalls how cartoons and movies fueled her feelings of inadequacy:

"In first grade I adored Bonnie Bondell, a girl in my class. She wasn't a cartoon character, but she could have been. She had glossy blonde hair and blue eyes. She had a sparkly smile and a sweet voice. She could have been Cinderella's younger sister or Sleeping Beauty's long, lost cousin. For those reasons I longed to be just like her. I look at old photos of myself now and have decided that I was pretty cute. I wasn't a traditional cutie and that's exactly what bothered me then. My father is African American and my mother is German and Irish. Put the two together and, well, I'm the result. Olive complexion, dark, curly hair, brown and green eyes. All wrong. At least according to the Fairy Tale Book of Standards.

Importantly, students saw themselves as actors in the world; they were fueled by the opportunity to convince some parents of the long-lasting effects cartoons impose on their children or to enlighten their peers about the roots of some of their insecurities. Instead of leaving students angry or shaking their heads about how bad the world is, we provided them the opportunity to make a difference.❐



Babar

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CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLES

Interview with Chief Tayac: Struggles Unite Native Peoples

Credit: Impact Visuals

Native Americans commemorate 100th anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre, 1890 - 1990.

The following is from an interview with Chief Billy Redwing Tayac of the Piscataway people, conducted by Phil Tajitsu Nash. In the talk, Chief Tayac stresses the unity of native peoples throughout the Americas and outlines some of their many struggles, in particular the fight to maintain their land.

My name is Billy Redwing Tayac. I am the hereditary chief of the Piscataway people, who are indigenous to Maryland, Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia. Our present ceremonial ground and spiritual and political center is located in what is called Port Tobacco, in Maryland.

Over the years, I have worked for the reclamation of Indian people. We have so many people who have lost their way, who don't know anything about their traditions or religion. This work involves "de-Angloization," or bringing our people back to the earth, back to being Indian people. It is hard to be an Indian in any city because we are separated from the earth by concrete. We can't feel the power of the earth, the wind, the trees.

All people, regardless of color, were at one time tied to the earth. Even the Europeans had tribes tied to the earth. The earth is everything to everybody.

My father, Chief Turkey Tayac, was a traditional chief, but I was much more interested in joining with other Indians in groups such as the American Indian Movement. Through AIM, I came to realize that to be an Indian today, one must transcend tribalism. We are a race of people. In the terminology of the movement, we are "Many Nations, One People". Whether we speak English, Spanish or Portuguese, Indians are all one people stretching from the tip of North America to the tip of South America.

The dominant society has divided us, cutting up our land into slices they call countries. But we are still a people. And not a

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small group of people. There are tens of millions of Indian people in the Western Hemisphere. With modern technology we can be in instant communication with our relatives in El Salvador, in the Brazilian rainforest. They can now board airplanes and we can talk with them, face to face, when they come to this country. We can hear their voices, share their feelings and, most importantly, look them in the eye.

Europeans Tried to Destroy Us

Nowhere in the annals of history has there been a repetition of what has occurred here. The Europeans invaded all our land, not just the United States, Panama, or Brazil. They invaded an entire hemisphere and tried their best to destroy a race of people and their cultures and religions. It is a holocaust that cannot be compared to anything else in the history of humanity. Even today, in the 20th Century, Indian people are not considered a part of mankind. An example of this is that in the United Nations, all other races of people—black, white and yellow — are represented. Red people have no voice. If atrocities occur against us, we as Indian people have to go to the oppressor government, whether Brazil, El Salvador or the United States, to voice our concerns. This parallel would be like a Jew going to Hitler to express his concerns about the horrible extermination policies directed towards his people in the 1940's.

One of the major areas where Indian people are fighting back is in the Black Hills area of South Dakota. The Lakota and other people consider this sacred ground. But it is also one of the richest 100 square miles on earth, with gold, uranium, and timber. Families like the Hearsts in California made a fortune by taking gold out of there, but the people still living there are among the poorest in the United States.

This is where the massacre of Indian people known as Wounded Knee took place 100 years ago, and where the American Indian Movement made a stand in 1973 that helped to spark the modern Indian movement for dignity and self-government.

This reminds me of an important lesson I have learned over the years about the use of terminology. When the Nazis occupied France during World War II, those who opposed them were called "freedom fighters." When Indian people have fought back against the taking of our land, we have been called "hostiles" or "communists." Likewise, when Sioux warriors defeated United States warriors at Little Big Horn in 1876, the popular press called it a "massacre." However, when the United States cavalry machine-gunned unarmed men, women and children at Wounded Knee in 1890, it was called a "battle" by the popular press. More Congressional Medals of Honor were given there then in any previous battle. It took over 70 years for the record to be set straight and for the events to be referred to by the names they deserve: the Battle of Little Big Horn and the Massacre at Wounded Knee.

There are Indian Wars continuing today — yes, today — in Guatemala and El Salvador. The slaughter of Indian people by a dominant European society continues. For example, Guatemala is a country with 85% Indian people, but the Indian people don't rule Guatemala. The standing army rules.

Mestizos are Really Indians

Look at the presidents and legislators in Central and South American countries. They are always lighter-complected people. They feel that Indian people are not capable of governing themselves, yet these people are descended from members of one of the greatest civilizations of all time, the Mayans.

Governments don't like to classify these people as Indians. What some call mestizos, Hispanics or Chicanos are really Indians. They are not classified that way because of paper genocide. They would prefer to kill them, as with the 38,000 killed in the 1930's in El Salvador. Everyone who looked a certain way or who wore certain clothing was shot and killed indiscriminately. Mexicans today with dark complexions and black hair will deny they are Indians. They will say, "I am a Mexican." They have been brainwashed, because the lowest people on the ladder are the Indians. Who wants to be part of that group?

The funny thing is, though, that when people stand up to call themselves Indians, governments get afraid of them. Maybe it's their Christian, Anglo sense of guilt. They don't want to admit what they've done to them, and don't want them to rise up again as a people. That's why, in the entire Western Hemisphere, there is no Indian country.

The rise of the American Indian Movement in the late 1960's helped to restore a sense of pride. People were no longer ashamed to be Indian. They demanded that treaties be upheld. They demanded to be treated as human beings. AIM brought back the traditions, customs and religions to thousands, maybe millions, of Indian people.

When someone commited a murder of an Indian person anywhere around the country, AIM people went there to ask why that murder resulted in only a manslaughter charge if the defendant was European American and the dead man was an Indian. When Indian people were tried by all-white juries, they were more often than not found guilty. De-

Credit: Minnesota Media

A Mayan testifies before an international tribunal on human rights abuses against Native Americans.

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spite being only half of one percent of the United States population, we have the highest rate of imprisonment of any group. When Indian people go to prison, they are not even recognized as Indians, but are called "others".

I would like it if every American would take a history book and look at the picture of Chief Big Foot frozen in his grave at Wounded Knee. These people were only seeking food to exist, and the United States exerted military might against them. Today, this military might still exists on the Indian reservations. They use their "legal bullets", the FBI and BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) to come onto reservations and investigate and imprison the Indian people. We stood up and exposed the BIA's corruption in our occupation of BIA headquarters in 1972, and stood up and showed the world that Indian people were still alive in our stand at Wounded Knee in 1973.

I had the fortune in the early 1970's of meeting a survivor of the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre. It seemed so impossible that it could have occurred, until you think about the My Lai massacre and the other horrible incidents in Vietnam. Many Indians, like AIM leader Bill Means, served in Vietnam, and recognized that, as soldiers, they were oppressors. Then at Wounded Knee in 1973, he was being shot at by the same soldiers he had served with. The important lesson is that the Indians serving in Vietnam felt a kinship with the Vietnamese.

We Are a Sovereign Peoples

This feeling of being outside the American government has its roots in the fact that we are sovereign people who were here thousands of years before Columbus. However, despite referendums in 1920 and 1922 where we said we did not want to be made United States citizens, we were forced [to be citizens] by the American Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Then, compounding our problems was the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934, which set up tribal corporations on Indian lands. Some sell-out Indian person would be made chairman of the local branch of this federal agency, and then he could sign away our rights to land or minerals. These tribal chairmen also tried to take power away from our traditional chiefs, using the lure of federal education or housing benefits. Fortunately, many of the Indian people did not fall for this trap.

There are other issues in Indian country. At Big Mountain in the Southwest, the Hopi and Navajo are being relocated because minerals were found under the land. Once people are relocated and given a small settlement, they have no skills for living in a town. Six months later, they are broke, homeless, and wanting to go home again.

In Western Minnesota, thousands of acres of land have been taken at the White Earth Reservation. Indian people who had legitimate claims were not told, and the government sold the lands to whites.

Indian Wars Continue

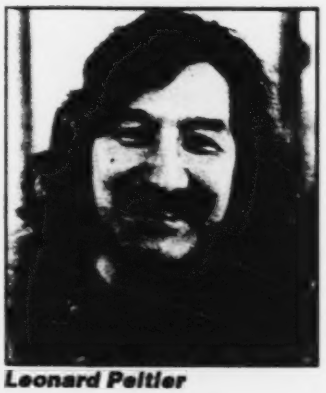
In Canada last summer, the Indian Wars continued. The Canadian government brought tanks to Indian reservations and held a siege at Oka. Less than 150 Mohawks protesting the proposed use of an ancestral burial ground for a golf course were surrounded by 5,000 federal troops.

These Indian Wars will never be over until the Indian people get their land back. Would the Jews accept money for the Wailing Wall? The Pope accept money for the Vatican? Would a Moslem accept money for the sale of Mecca? No, we can never accept the loss, the theft of ancestral lands. And because Indian people are all one people, we can never forget Wounded Knee, just like the Japanese American people can never forget the internment their people suffered [during World War II].

Even today in the United States, there are Native American political prisoners such as Leonard Peltier, who has served 15 years of two consecutive lifetime sentences for murders he did not commit. After a shoot-out at Wounded Knee in 1975, the FBI used fear tactics and trumped-up charges to get Peltier arrested, tried, and jailed. While he is not well known in the U.S., Peltier is well known to many in Europe and is a modern-day hero, on the scale of Crazy Horse, to Indian people.

We all need to band together today to save Mother Earth. We should be making food so that no one is hungry. Every person should have shelter and health care. There should be no dominant class based on color of skin or gender. There should be no dominant country because of the amount of money they have or the power they wield. All human beings should come together for the good of the earth.

The elders once told me that the Indian people were spared so that we can be the driving force to save Mother Earth. The ashes of our ancestors have been intermingled with the earth on this continent for millennia. In this 500th anniversary of the coming together with Europeans, it is a good time to remember this. ❐



Leonard Peltier

"We may have been happy with the land

that was originally reserved to us. But continually over the years more and more of our land has been stolen from us by the Canadian and U.S. governments. In the 19th Century, our land was stolen from us for economic reasons because the land was lush and fertile and abounded with food. We were left with what white society thought was worthless land....

Today, what was once called worthless land suddenly becomes valuable as the technology of white society advances. White society would now like to push us off our reservations because beneath the barren land lie valuable mineral and oil resources. It is not a new development for white society to steal from nonwhite peoples. When white society succeeds it's called colonialism. When white society's efforts to colonize people are met with resistance it's called war. But when the colonized Indians of North America meet to stand and resist we are called criminals."

— Leonard Peltier

For more information on Leonard Peltier, write the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, PO Box 583, Lawrence, Kan., 66044, 913-842-5774. You can also write Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, Kan., 66048.

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Columbus Day

By Jimmie Durham

In school I was taught the names
Columbus, Cortez, and Pizzaro and
A dozen other filthy murderers.
A bloodline all the way to General Miles,
Daniel Boone and General Eisenhower.

No one mentioned the names
Of even a few of the victims.
But don't you remember Chaske, whose spine
Was crushed so quickly by Mr. Pizzaro's boot?
What words did he cry into the dust?

What was the familiar name
Of that young girl who danced so gracefully
That everyone in the village sang with her —
Before Cortez' sword hacked off her arms
As she protested the burning of her sweet-
heart?

That young man's name was Many Deeds,
And he had been a leader of a band of fighters
Called the Redstick Hummingbirds, who slowed
The march of Cortez' army with only a few
Spears and stones which now lay still
In the mountains and remember.

Greenrock Woman was the name
Of that old lady who walked right up
And spat in Columbus' face. We
Must remember that, and remember
Laughing Otter the Taino who tried to stop
Columbus and was taken away as a slave.
We never saw him again.

In school I learned of heroic discoveries
Made by liars and crooks. The courage
Of millions of sweet and true people
Was not commemorated.

Let us then declare a holiday
For ourselves, and make a parade that begins
With Columbus' victims and continues
Even to our grandchildren who will be named
In their honor.

Because isn't it true that even the summer
Grass here in this land whispers those names,
And every creek has accepted the responsibility
Of singing those names? And nothing can stop
The wind from howling those names around
The corners of the school.

Why else would the birds sing
So much sweeter here than in other lands?

Cred: Felipe Guaman Poma

Guatemala
Indians Fight Modern *Conquistadores*

By Deborah Menkart

"We have been fighting for our land for 500 years," says Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan Quiché Indian woman. In Guatemala, as in most of the Americas, the inequities created by the European conquest continue today.

The new conquerors are multinational corporations, government and military elites. Modern-day *conquistadores* travel by jet instead of by sailboat, but control of cheap labor and resources are still the paths to gold. Ads in the *Wall Street Journal* encourage businessmen to "Come Discover" the low wages of Puerto Rico or Mexico.

Indians and poor ladino peasants (of mixed Indian and European descent) continue to fight for the right to grow enough food for families and to protect cultural traditions.

This division reflects fundamentally different beliefs about society and its relationships to the environment. Mayan Indians hold that the "land is sacred, the corn is sacred, the rain is sacred. The land is alive and gives us life." The multinationals look at land in terms of potential profits. If carnations are more profitable than corn on the international market, then that's what they'll plant, even if as a result children in the local community die of hunger.

U.S.-Financed Coup

In Guatemala, native people have consistently resisted the abuse of their land and communities. In 1944, a coalition of Indians and middle-class ladinos toppled the government. They instituted land reform, wrote a new constitution, and held elections.

The wealthy landowners and foreign corporations were angry at the new government. In 1954, at the urging of large U.S. corporations such as the United Fruit Company (Chiquita bananas), the Eisenhower administration financed a military coup. The military seized the peasants' new lands and returned them to large landowners.

With the military in power to deal with peasant protests, the landowners and multinationals began an aggressive campaign to expand their holdings. The US Agency for International Development (AID) began massive funding for agro-exports such as beef, with devastating repercussions for the majority of the population. To graze cattle, growers take land away from peasants and deforest vast expanses of rainforest. Cattle ranching produces few jobs and deprives families of farm land.

Though tremendously profitable for a few, this agricultural "boom" has resulted in increasing poverty for much of the population, widescale destruction of the rain forest, and intense pesticide contamination of the people and the environment.

Campesinos have organized to take back their land and resources. They speak for the defense of the environment and their communities.

Their demands are frequently met with violence. In 1980, Indians marched to Guatemala City to petition the government. Their pleas were ignored and, to call attention to their plight, they occupied the Spanish Embassy. The Guatemalan army attacked and burned the building, killing nearly everyone inside.

Massacres like this marked a turning point that has resulted in an upsurge of grassroots resistance, as entire Indian communities joined the popular movement or the armed opposition.

In an effort to repress this growing opposition, the army has systematically murdered over 45,000 people, mostly Indian, razed hundreds of villages, destroyed vast areas of forests and fields, and displaced more than a million people. Guatemalans have been forced by the thousands to settle in "model villages."

Ethnocide Against Indians

As a Kekchí Indian explains: "Ethnocide is being carried out in Guatemala against the indigenous people, not just by killing us by the thousands, but also by the destruction of our way of life. Today in Guatemala we are facing the greatest threat to our land and people since the conquest."

Guatemalan resistance takes many forms, ranging from almost daily skirmishes between guerillas and the army, to the organi-

Credit: David Bacon

Children in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. The impact of 500 years of European colonization has been devastating to the children of the Americas.

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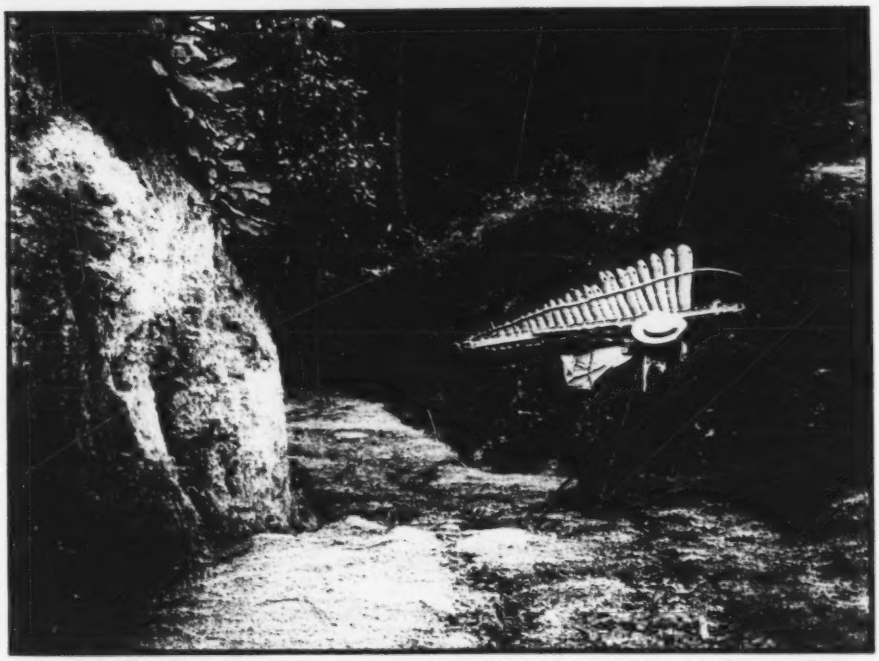
zation of industrial and agricultural unions, neighborhood associations, and church groups. It includes day-to-day efforts of thousands of Indian people to maintain their values and their culture. And there are people in "Communities in Resistance" who refuse to be resettled into the army's militarized zones, and who live clandestinely in the forests of Quiché. They grow food for their own consumption in small scattered fields and struggle to keep ahead of the army's troops. These Communities in Resistance serve as the seed of hope for a new society.

Rigoberta Menchú

Rigoberta Menchú provides an example of the spirit of resistance found throughout the Americas. Her commitment to her ancestors, to her family and to the future are shared in her testimonial book, *I...Rigoberta Menchú*, where she documents not only her life, "but the story of all poor Guatemalans." She describes her work as a child on the coffee plantations, her family and community traditions, and the repression. Below she tells the story of why her family decided to organize:

"My father fought for 22 years, waging a heroic struggle against the landlords who wanted to take our land and our neighbors' land. After many years of hard work, when our small bit of land began yielding harvests and our people had a large area under cultivation, the big landlords appeared. They told us we could either stay and work for them or leave the land.

"The first time they threw us out of our houses was in 1967. They turned us out of our houses, and out of the village. The man who worked for the landlords went into the houses without permission and got all the people out. Then they went in and threw out all our things. I remember that my mother had some silver necklaces, precious keepsakes from my grandmother, but we never saw them again; they stole them all. They threw out our cooking utensils, and the pottery cooking pots that we had made ourselves. They hurled them up in the air; and, Oh, God! they hit the ground and broke into pieces. All our plates, cups, pots. They threw them out and they all broke. That was the revenge of the landlord on us peasants because we wouldn't give up our land. Then they threw out all the corn that we had stored up for the year. I remember it was pouring rain, and we had nothing to protect ourselves from the rain. It took us two days to make a roughly built hut out of leaves. We had only plastic sheets to cover ourselves from the rain. The first night we spent in the fields with streams of water running along the ground....



Credit: David Bacon

The Mayan people are accompanied by the sounds of the marimba from birth to death.

"We loved our land very much. Since those people tried to take our land away, we have grieved very much. My grandfather used to cry bitterly and say: 'In the past, no one person owned the land. The land belonged to everyone. There were no boundaries.' We were sadder still when we saw our animals going hungry. If our animals went near our crops, they were killed by the men who worked for the landlords....We didn't know if it was better to leave and go to work on the coffee plantations, or agree to work for the landlord. We couldn't decide. We discussed it with all our neighbors, among the whole community. During all this time we couldn't celebrate our culture; none of our ceremonies. That's when my father took his stand. he said, 'If they kill me for trying to defend the land that belongs to us, well they'll have to kill me.'

"We began to organize. Our organization had no name. We began by each of us trying to remember the tricks our ancestors used. They used to set traps in their houses, in the path of the *conquistadores*, the Spaniards. Our ancestors were good fighters, they were real men. It's not true what white people say, that our ancestors didn't defend themselves. They used ambushes. Our grandparents used to tell us about it, especially my grandfather when he saw that we were beginning to talk about defending ourselves against the landowners, and wondering if we had to rid ourselves of the landowners before we'd be left in peace. We said: 'If they threaten us, why don't we threaten the landowner?' My grandfather gave us a lot of support. My grandfather said, 'Yes you have to defend yourselves. Our ancestors defended themselves. The white men are telling lies when they say we are passive. They fought too. And we, why don't we fight with the same arms the landowners use?' If an elderly person tells us this, then it must be true." ❐

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Deborah Menkart is Director of the Network of Educators on Central America.

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Credit: Impact Visuals

Water diverted by the James Bay Project rushes behind Dale House, a Cree.

James Bay: Cree and Inuit Defend Lands

James Neacappo, a 48-year-old Cree in the James Bay region of Canada, remembers the beaver-trapping areas of his childhood. But he can never trap there again. The region now lies under more than 500 feet of water.

The trapping ground is a victim of the James Bay hydro-electric development. The largest such project planned in the world, it is due to include hundreds of dams and dikes, scores of power stations and the diversion of dozens of rivers.

The Cree view the project as both a threat to their way of life and an environmental catastrophe comparable to the destruction of tropical rainforests.

"We've been living off the land for 5,000 years," said Matthew Mukash, a member of the Grand Council of the Cree of Quebec, the group leading opposition to the project. "If you flood the land, you destroy our economic base."

The project's first phase has already displaced thousands of Cree from their traditional lands. Two more phases are planned. If completed, the project would affect a total of 10,500 Cree and 6,000 Inuit in an area larger than reunified Germany.

The Cree and Inuit note that the project is being built primarily so Quebec can export energy to the northeast United States. Thus they have been building alliances with Native Americans and environmental groups in this country to stop phases two and three.

The James Bay project encompasses roughly 135,000 square miles in a region of rivers, lakes and wetlands jutting off James Bay, which lies on the southern end of Hudson Bay in Quebec, Canada. The project is the brainchild of Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, who has made it the centerpiece of his administration's economic development plans. The first phase, known as the La Grande complex, was started in 1971. Completion of phases two and three is scheduled for the early part of the next century.

The scope of even the first phase defies imagination. Rivers were blocked and diverted, dams and dikes were built that extend for scores of miles, and reservoirs were formed where once there were rivers, lakes and wetlands. The La Grande 2 dam gives a sense of the project's scope. The dam is 1.7 miles long, almost half a mile wide at the base, and is as tall as a 53-story building.

The Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec has successfully sued the Quebec and Canadian governments to prevent expansion of the James Bay network until all environmental and social impact studies are completed.

Mukash said one of the main problems is the mercury contamination caused by the decomposition of vegetation in lands submerged by the project's reservoirs. This contamination has spread to the region's fish, to the wildlife that feed on the fish, and to people who eat the fish and wildlife. As a result, two-thirds of the Cree are estimated to have dangerously high mercury levels.

Mercury is not the only problem, however. Displaced Cree, stripped of their ancestral hunting and trapping grounds, also suffer the consequences of being hurled into a new way of life. According to a special report in the Canadian magazine, *MacLean's*, alcoholism is on the rise, and the unemployment rate among Cree aged 15 to 21 is now 55%.

Environmental groups have banded together with the Cree, stressing the global importance of James Bay. According to the publication *Earthroots* in Toronto, the Hudson Bay/James Bay region is North America's main migratory waterfowl area, Canada's largest wetlands region, and one of the world's largest inland seas. It contains the world's largest beluga whale population and the largest caribou herd.

As a result of their lawsuit demanding environmental and social impact studies, the Cree have delayed the start of phase two until at least November 1992, Mukash said.

"We're hopeful that they will have to cancel the [rest of the] project," Mukash said. "But there's no guarantee yet." ❐

Our Land, Our Life:

Native Peoples Organize for Justice in the Americas

"Holy Mother Earth, the trees and all nature are witness of your thoughts and deeds." - A Winnebago saying

Native Peoples throughout the Americas share this perspective and today are organizing to protect the earth and their culture from those who would abuse them. Below are a few examples:

Amazon
Amazonian Indians are protesting the damage caused by logging and mining companies and gold prospectors. They are demanding that international aid to the Amazon come with the strict condition that Indian organizations be involved in the programs.

Caribs
To strengthen their continuing struggle for justice today, Caribs held the first Conference of Indigenous Peoples of the English-speaking Caribbean in 1987. They now plan to build links with the indigenous groups of Guyana and the rest of Central and South America.

Cheyenne
Native Action, a citizen's organization in Northern Cheyenne, Montana, is opposing the Federal Government's largest coal sale in the history of the U.S., which includes a 100-mile tract of land in Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota.

Cree and Inuit
At James Bay in Canada, the Cree and Inuit are organizing against the construction of the single largest hydroelectric dam project in North America.

Gwichin
On the Artic National Wildlife Refuge in the Yukon, home to the caribou herd on which they rely, the Gwichin people are trying to stop oil development.

Hoopa and Yurok
In the Smith River Recreational Area in N. California, the Hoopa and Yurok people have been fighting to ensure the protection of religious and sacred sites in their homeland, which is threatened by U.S. Forest Service plans to construct a logging road in the area.

Ixil
To protect their access to farm lands, the Ixil of El Quiché, Guatemala have formed "popular resistance communities." These communities fled army massacres in 1982 and remain in the mountains. As one Ixil woman explained, "We are living in resistance from the army. Our demand is that the government grant us true peace and freedom."

Lakota
The Native Resource Coalition of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota opposes a toxic waste dump and surface mining.

Lillioett
The Lillioett people of British Columbia seek to protect an undeveloped mountain and its valley from development and logging.

Mohawk
In protest to the extension of a golf course into ancestral lands in Oka, Quebec, Mohawks erected barricades over a bridge linking Montreal with its southern suburbs. During the nine-week impasse, the police and the Mohawks clashed violently.

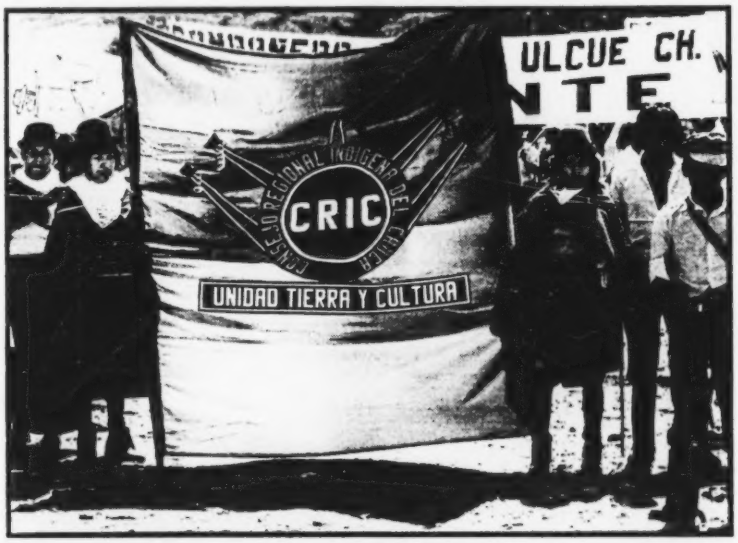
Navajo
Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (CARE) on the Navajo Reservation successfully stopped the construction of a toxic waste incinerator within their reservation. CARE organized the first national meeting of grassroots groups working on environmental issues in the summer of 1990.

Ojibway
The La Courte Oreilles and other bands of Ojibways in Wisconsin oppose the construction of a copper and zinc mining facility which will devastate the local ecosystem.

Sirionós
In Beni, Bolivia, the Sirionós and other indigenous groups have fought since 1988 to save their lands from destruction by cattle ranchers and logging companies. Over 700 Chimanes, Movimas, Yucarés, Sirionos and Mojenos joined a 600-kilometer March for Territory and Dignity in 1990 to publicize their demand for the "right to their land and dignity."

Wauja
A traditional native people of the Brazilian rainforest, the Wauja are peacefully organizing to defend their land from ranchers and poachers. ❐

Sources: Amazon Network, The Panos Institute, NACLA, SAIIC, *(Addresses in the resource guide.)*



Colombian Indians protest human rights violations by government.

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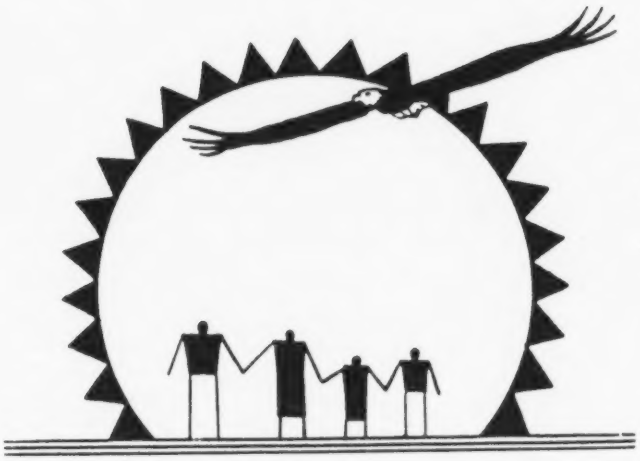
Indian Singing in 20th Century America

by Gail Tremblay

We wake; we wake the day,
the light rising in us like sun -
our breath a prayer brushing
against the feathers in our hands.
We stumble out into streets;
patterns of wires invented by strangers
are strung between eye and sky,
and we dance in two worlds,
inevitable as seasons in one,
exotic curiosities in the other
which rushes headlong down highways,
watches us from car windows, explains
us to its children in words
that no one could ever make
sense of. The image obscures
the vision, and we wonder
whether anyone will ever hear
our own names for the things
we do. Light dances in the body,
surrounds all living things -
even the stones sing
although their songs are infinitely
lower than the ones we learn
from trees. No human voice lasts
long enough to make such music sound.
Earth breath eddies between factories
and office buildings, caresses the surface
of our skin; we go to jobs, the boss
always watching the clock to see
that we're on time. He tries to shut
out magic and hopes we'll make
mistakes or disappear. We work
fast and steady and remember
each breath alters the composition
of the air. Change moves relentless,
the pattern unfolding despite their
planning -
we're always there - singing round dance
songs, remembering what supports our
life - impossible to ignore.



The Earth is a Satellite of the Moon

By Leonel Rugama

Apollo 2 cost more than Apollo 1
Apollo 1 cost plenty.

Apollo 3 cost more than Apollo 2
Apollo 2 cost more than Apollo 1
Apollo 1 cost plenty.

Apollo 4 cost more than Apollo 3
Apollo 3 cost more than Apollo 2
Apollo 2 cost more than Apollo 1
Apollo 1 cost plenty.

Apollo 8 cost a fortune, but no one minded
because the astronauts were Protestant
they read the bible from the moon
astounding and delighting every Christian
and on their return Pope Paul VI
gave them his blessing.

Apollo 9 cost more than all these put together
including Apollo 1 which cost plenty.

The great-grandparents of the people
of Acahualinca
were less hungry than the grandparents.
The great-grandparents died of hunger.
The grandparents of the people of Acahualinca
were less hungry than the parents.
The grandparents died of hunger.
The parents of the people of Acahualinca were less
hungry than the children of the people there.
The parents died of hunger.

The people of Acahualinca are less hungry
than the children of the people there.
The children of the people of Acahualinca,
because of hunger, are not born
they hunger to be born, only to die of hunger.
Blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the moon.

From The Earth is a Satellite of the Moon, *Curbstone Press. Bilingual edition. Translations by Sara Miles, Richard Schaaf and Nancy Weisberg.*

Textbook Crimes and Misdemeanors: Columbus is only the beginning

The danger of the Columbus myth goes beyond distortions about the European conquest of the Americas. The myth also prepares children to accept a winners' perspective and to ignore the views of less powerful groups.

The following is excerpted from a 85-page analysis that grew out of a struggle against the California state adoption of the Houghton-Mifflin history/social science series. Written by members of Communities United against Racism in Education, it provides a concrete example of how parents and teachers can organize to make education more equitable.

The World I See (kindergarten)

Comment: In the lessons on family and community, all the families shown or discussed are intact nuclear families; all of the communities appear to be middle-class. Nowhere is discussed single-parent or alternative families (e.g. families formed by adoption, foster families, court-appointed placements, gay or lesbian parents). Nowhere is discussed homelessness or poverty.

Some People I Know (Grade 2)

Excerpt: "Yoshiko Uchida wanted to be both Japanese and American. Sometimes this was hard. During those years, America and Japan were at war with each other. Many people thought Japanese people could not also be Americans. Uchida's family and other Japanese Americans had to leave their homes and go to special camps built by the Army. While Uchida was there, she taught second grade. When the war was over, the camp was closed and everyone left to make new homes." (pp. 169-170)

Comment: This passage justifies the incarceration of Japanese-American people by the U.S. government, and fails to mention the wholesale theft of Japanese-American property. Nor does it mention that the U.S. government was forced to apologize and pay reparations to survivors of the internments. The opportunity existed here to explore the issue of Japanese internment during World War II, and to develop empathy for another people's human rights and dignity, but the author chose to gloss over the issue.

Oh California (Grade 4)

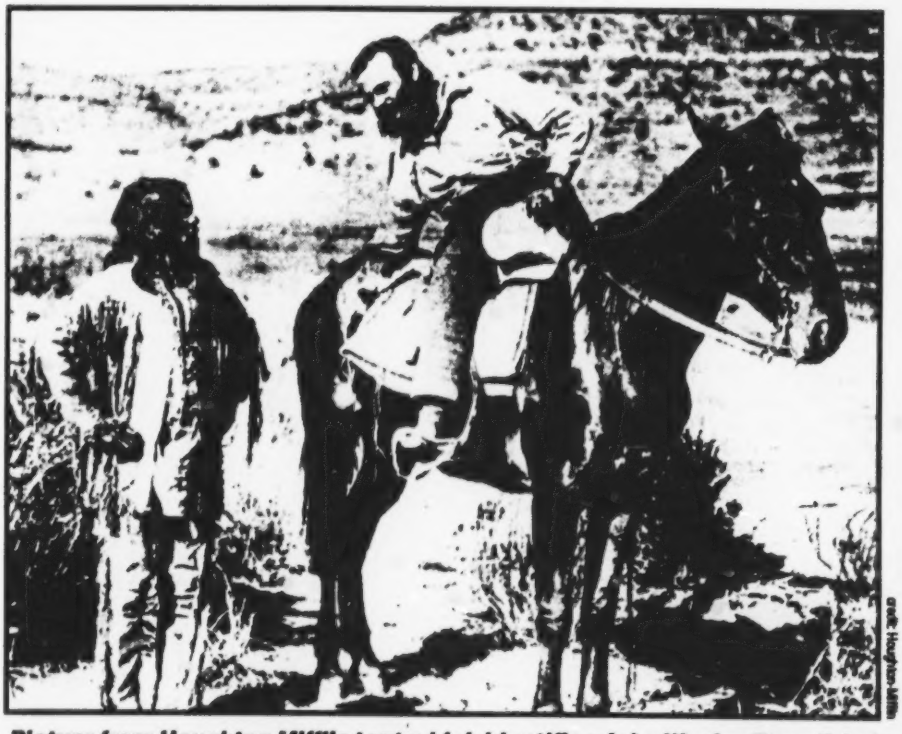
Excerpt: "Cortés found beautiful silver and gold treasures in the Aztec cities. The Spanish government started a colony in Mexico and ordered that all the riches found there had to be sent to Spain." (p.59)

Comment: Cortés did not "find" anything — he raped, killed, looted, and pillaged the Aztec nation. Like all of this chapter, the narrative takes the perspective of the invaders, omitting the fact that the invaders destroyed entire societies of indigenous peoples.

Excerpt: "Joaquin! Just the whisper of his name sent chills down the spines of Californians. It was the winter of 1852-1853, and the legend of Joaquin Murieta and his *gang* was spreading quickly across California. In the cities and towns, fearful citizens shared stories of murder, stolen cattle, and stagecoach robberies. Joaquin! they gasped. No one felt safe... Who was this *Mexican bandit?*... The people of California were not taking any chances. They hired a man named Captain John Love to find Joaquin... They cheered when they heard the news of the *Mexican bandit's* death." (p.146, emphasis added)

Comment: Joaquin Murieta was a Mexican hero and liberator who, in his battles with the invaders, stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Mexican revolutionaries were called "bandits" by the wealthy and powerful in order to discredit their struggle.

Excerpt: "The writings of (Charlotte Perkins) Gilman and other women urged the government to make laws that would protect workers and families. Women helped bring about new schools and housing, safer food, and higher pay for laborers. One of the biggest victories was in 1911, when the



credit: Houghton-Mifflin

Picture from Houghton Mifflin text which identifies John Wesley Powell, but not the Native American. The text also says Powell was the first to travel the Colorado River the entire length of the canyon.

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Progressives passed a law that gave California women the right to vote." (p. 235, teachers edition)

Comment: From this passage, it would appear that women were the passive recipients of the right to vote. The author does not see fit to mention the women's struggle for the vote, for equal rights, and against slavery and other forms of exploitation.

America Will Be (grade 5)

Excerpt: "How did the invention of the cotton gin increase the *need for slaves* in the South? (Additional *slaves were needed* to work these larger fields.)" (p.404, teachers guide) "Thus, Eli Whitney's time- and labor-saving invention actually increased the *need for slave labor.*" (p.404, emphasis added in both)

Comment: The cotton gin increased the need for labor, not slave labor. The use of slavery was an individual and collective choice as a system of labor, not an inevitable component of United States society. This passage justifies slavery by presenting it as essential.

Excerpt: "During the 1870s and 1880s, many companies built railroads in other parts of the United States. By 1880, over 115,000 miles of track crisscrossed the country." (p. 480)

Comment: Companies did not build the railroads. Workers built the railroads. There is no mention, except in the teachers guide, of the thousands of Chinese workers who built the many railroad systems connecting the West with the rest of the country.

Excerpt: "John Wesley Powell, standing on the right, explored the Grand Canyon by boat, in 1869. Few people knew about the canyon's beauty until Powell shared information he learned on his journey." (p. 21)

Comment: This photograph shows two men. One of them is John Wesley Powell. The other, a native man, is not identified. Why? And we doubt that "few people knew about the canyon's beauty." What about the indigenous peoples who lived there? Here, "White people" equals "people," and native people, as usual, are invisible. ❐

This analysis was prepared by Beverly Slapin, with Junee Hunt, Doris Seale, Jose Garcia, Jean Ishibashi and Sam Cacas. Some of the above is drawn from The Association of Chinese Teachers and the Rochester City School District Multicultural Project (special thanks to Joyce King and Ellen Swartz.)

The Danger of "Harmless" School Mascots

Go White Boys!
Victory to the Black Skins!
Rah Rah Chinamen!

Can you imagine any school district in the country tolerating such racist cheerleading for sports teams?

Of course not. So why are millions of children attending schools with mascots and sports teams such as the Redmen, the Warriors, the Red Raiders and the Indians?

Nor are such demeaning stereotypes limited to elementary and high schools. There's also the Marquette Warriors at Marquette University in Milwaukee, the Atlanta Braves baseball team, and the Washington Redskins football team — just to name a few.

Concrete Way to Fight Bias

Organizing against such mascots and sports names provides a concrete way to combat bias against Native Americans. At best, your efforts will lead to a change in names. At worst, it will raise consciousness about the negative nature of such mascots and names.

While some schools have gotten rid of Native American mascots, many refuse to do so. In Wisconsin, for example, there are an estimated 78 schools with Native American mascot names, according to the state's Department of Public Instruction.

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council has asked Wisconsin officials to prohibit public schools from using Native American images and caricatures as mascots or in logos. Public opposition to the proposal has underscored the amount of work that needs to be done in changing attitudes.

In the Wisconsin town of Milton, a letter-to-the-editor reflected a common reaction to attempts to change the name of the high school's teams, the "Redmen."

"Why does one woman want to change a logo that has been used at Milton High School for over 50 years...," the letter asked. "People of Milton, don't let her get away with it. Stand up and fight like your Redmen teams do."

Native Americans make several points to counter such views:

•Why are Indians used as names for teams and as mascots in the same way as badgers, gophers, or eagles? Are Indian people equated with animals and seen as less-than-human?

• Mascots are often used to provide comic relief during half time; they are silly creatures not to be taken seriously. Why perpetuate such a view of Native Americans?

•The mascots help people deny the modern-day existence of "real Indians" living and working in the 20th century.

"By tolerating the use of demeaning stereotypes in our public school systems, we desensitize entire generations of children."

• The mascots perpetuate the stereotype that Native Americans are bloodthirsty and savage.

•Teams and mascots aren't named the Jew Boys, or the Black Savages, or the Spics, or the Yellow Peril. Why isn't there the same sensitivity toward racism against Native Americans?

"Racially demeaning stereotypes are dangerous," notes Carol Hand, a Native American parent who has filed a legal complaint against the Milton school mascots. "By tolerating the use of demeaning stereotypes in our public school systems, we desensitize entire generations of children." ❐

— Barbara Miner

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

African-Americans: *Mourn the Quincentenary and Celebrate Resistance*

By Bill Fletcher, Jr.

African-Americans have no reason to celebrate the Columbus Quincentenary. Rather, we should mourn his arrival in the Americas.

Columbus opened up the Western Hemisphere to European invasion and exploitation. This had devastating consequences not only for Africans, but for Hispanics, Native Americans and other people of color.

Columbus also initiated the trans-Atlantic slave trade, sending 500 Taínos back to Spain during his second voyage. In later decades, millions of Africans were kidnapped and brought as slaves to the Western Hemisphere. The slave trade not only killed and dehumanized millions of people, it irrevocably distorted the development of African civilization. Families were torn apart, societies collapsed, and the way was opened for Europe's invasion and colonization of the continent.

Examining Columbus's impact on Africans can help us understand current problems. African-Americans still suffer the effects of the racist ideology that justified slavery. Likewise, the European-American ruling class still uses racism to maintain its power. Just as in the previous 500 years, discrimination and division based on skin color is used to prevent unity between people of color and poor and working-class whites.

Despite the myths surrounding Columbus, he is integrally connected to these legacies. He initiated large-scale experiments in exploitation which would become trademarks of the European invasion of the Americas: the plundering of gold and silver, and the enslavement of native peoples. He brought sugar cane root from the Canary Islands and planted it on what is now the Dominican Republic. By the early 1500s, African slaves owned by his son Diego were harvesting sugar cane; throughout the West Indies, hundreds of thousands of Africans suffered early deaths from overwork on sugar plantations.

It is also important to understand that Africans and native peoples resisted the European slave trade. Their resistance ranged from individual escapes to rebellions involving hundreds and, in some cases, tens of thousands of people.

Columbus Boasts of Slavery

From the first day Columbus arrived in the Western Hemisphere, he thought about enslaving native peoples. As he wrote the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, "Should your majesties command it, all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile, or made slaves on the island. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."

On his second voyage, Columbus tried to make good on this boast. Some 500 Taíno Indians were sent back to Spain to be sold as slaves, although most of them died enroute or shortly after arriving.

Columbus's pioneering ventures in thievery and enslavement helped set in motion events which left Africa vulnerable to over 400 years of invasion and colonization.

It would only take a short time after Columbus arrived for the Spanish and Portuguese to decide to bring African slaves to the Americas. The European colonizers realized that while Native Americans were able to flee into the forests, Africans would have a hard time escaping on an alien continent.

By 1501 the Spanish monarchs had issued their first laws governing the African slave trade and by 1510 hundreds of slaves had been transported to the Americas for sale. By the 1700s, slavery was flourishing in the middle and lower colonies of British America, in the West Indies, and on the mainland of South America.

The impact of the African slave trade was staggering. By the time it was over in the mid 1800s, Africa had lost millions of people. No one knows how many, with estimates ranging from 5 million to as high as 40 million.

Lerone Bennett, Jr., in his book, *Before the Mayflower, A History of Black America*, points out that the slave trade's consequences cannot be captured by mere statistics:

"The slave trade was a black man who stepped out of his house for a breath of fresh air and ended up, ten months later, in Georgia with bruises on his back and a brand on his chest.

The slave trade was a black mother suffocating her newborn baby because she didn't want him to grow up a slave.

The slave trade was a 'kind' captain forcing his suicide-minded passengers to eat by breaking their teeth, though, as he said, he was 'naturally compassionate.'

The slave trade was a bishop sitting on an ivory chair on a wharf in the Congo and extending his fat hand in wholesale baptism of slaves who were rowed beneath him, going in chains to the slave ships."

The Evolution Toward Slavery

Slavery did not immediately assume a leading position in the economic life of the Western Hemisphere.

In what is now the United States, the colonial upper classes initially relied upon European paupers for much of their labor force. Many immigrants served as indentured servants who had to work seven years before they could gain their freedom. Others came as "redemptioners," obligated to pay their trans-Atlantic fare within two years of their arrival or be sold to the highest bidder. Much of this servant class was provided by Irish, English, and German tenant farmers seeking a better life.

The demand for a colonial workforce also encouraged unscrupulous practices: kidnappers snatched adults and children off the streets of London and Bristol, and magistrates transported religious dissenters and people convicted of petty thievery.

Together, the indentured servants, redemptioners, those kidnapped, and former "convicts" composed about one-half of all English immigrants during the colonial period.

By the middle of the 1600s, the European and colonial upper classes saw drawbacks in this approach. British merchants worried that emigration was depriving them of inexpensive wage laborers. And in the British colonies along the Atlantic seaboard, poor whites remained scarce in relation to labor needs, and threatened to become an independent political force. Further, indentured servants often escaped, or demanded land at the end of their service.

Black slaves thus became an attractive source of labor. Racism conveniently justified slavery. And from the European perspective, using African slaves made economic sense. The same amount of money it took to buy 10 years of a white person's labor would buy the entire lifetime of a black person's.

To make slavery work, laws and ideas in the colonies had to be changed. From 1619, when the first Africans appeared in English America, until about 1660, blacks shared many of the rights enjoyed by poor whites. Black indentured servants could gain their freedom after seven years, just as whites could. In many places, blacks were allowed to own land, vote, and testify in court.

With Virginia and Maryland in the lead, the colonies began to promote the prejudices, legal codes, and customs upon which a slave economy could flourish. Laws were passed which made blacks slaves for life and which outlawed intermarriage. Confronted with the embarrassment of Christian slaves, presumably possessing souls equal to those of whites in the eyes of God, Virginia legislators passed a 1667 law which stipulated, "The conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom."

Once sanctioned by law and religion, slavery in the 13 colonies took off. In 1710, there were 50,000 slaves in what is now the United States. In 1776 there were 500,000, and on the eve of the civil war there were 4 million.

Slavery brought immense wealth to a tiny class of Europeans both in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. This wealth not only supported extravagant lifestyles, it provided the money needed to launch modern-day capitalism and the industrial revolution.

This wealth first came from the gold and silver taken from the Western Hemisphere, minerals mined by slaves, both black and Native-American, and forced laborers. Other endeavors based on slavery, especially the production of sugar, cotton, and tobacco, also became a tremendous source of capital. In addition, slave products from the Western Hemisphere, such as cotton, provided raw materials for British factories.

Toussaint L'Ouverture defeated English, Spanish, and French armies, paving the way for Haitian independence in 1825.

Slave Resistance

From the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Africans organized rebellions. Historian Herbert Aptheker has documented 250 conspiracies, revolts, and acts of resistance in the United States during the slave era. Insurrection leaders such as Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner struck terror into the hearts of slave owners. In addition, at least 40,000 slaves in the U.S. escaped to states where slavery was illegal and Canada, using the "Underground Railroad" organized by black and white abolitionists.

The largest slave revolts took place in South America and the West Indies. The longest rebellion took place in Northeast Brazil, where escaped slaves organized the kingdom of Palmares — which grew to one-third the size of Portugal. For most of the 18th century, until ultimate defeat, thousands of former slaves successfully resisted dozens of Dutch and Portuguese military expeditions.

The most famous slave revolt was led by the Haitian slave Toussaint L'Ouverture in the early 1800s. A brilliant general, L'Ouverture defeated English, Spanish, and

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Abraham, a Florida slave who become an influential interpreter and counselor with the Seminoles.

French armies — laying the groundwork for Haitian independence from France in 1825. Haiti thus became the first free black republic in the Western Hemisphere.

Faced with a common oppressor, Native Americans and African slaves were often allies. Perhaps the most remarkable example in what is now the United States were the "Seminole Wars" in Florida from the early 1800s until 1842. The Seminoles were comprised of Creek Indians who settled in Florida, runaway slaves and remnants of the original tribes in the area. Together, they resisted the U.S. Army during the Seminole Wars, which were the costliest wars ever fought by the United States against Native Americans, and which never ended in clear victory for the U.S. Army.

According to Guyanese historian Jan Carew, U.S. soldiers sent to fight these insurgents "brought back tales of extraordinary courage, of the Indians and Negroes fighting together, Indians under the leadership of Negroes, Negroes under the leadership of Indians, and of the great devotion between the two groups."

Columbus's African Legacy

While North Americans, both black and white, have had to confront the reverberations of slavery in the United States, we have scant knowledge of the slave trade's profound impact on Africa. To the extent most Americans think of Africa, it is as a homogeneous place — rather than a massive continent filled with many different ethnic groups which defy easy generalizations.

Perhaps one safe generalization is that most of Africa's peoples were eventually affected by Columbus's voyages. His pioneering ventures in thievery and enslavement helped set in motion events which left Africa vulnerable to over 400 years of invasion and colonization.

The slave trade had the same effect on various societies in Africa that the kidnapping of an individual family member would have on an individual family — multiplied several million times. To fuel the slave trade European invaders pitted ethnic groups and empires against one another, supplying some groups with weapons and then buying the prisoners from any wars. As a result, many societies became fractured and demoralized, particularly in Western Africa. Class divisions and inequalities deepened as African rulers provided increasing numbers of people to the slave market.

As historian Hosea Jaffe notes, "Slaving became the major commerce inside Africa itself, involving more people and money than all other commerce put together."

While slavery existed among Africans before the European slave trade, slaves owned by Africans were not treated with the absolute brutality which characterized the European slave trade. And by encouraging the capture of slaves for export, the trans-Atlantic slave trade inalterably changed life in large regions of Africa.

West Indian historian Walter Rodney describes the impact of slavery in West Africa this way: "For the vast majority it [the slave trade] brought insecurity and fear, whether or not they were able to escape sale into slavery, because the slave trade meant violence in the form of skirmishes, ambushes and kidnappings — often carried out by professional man-hunters under the supervision of the ruling elites. This atmosphere of fear caused people to flee their villages into the bush or remove their homes to places which were difficult to get to and agriculturally inhospitable. Alternatively, as was noticeable on the waterside, many Africans walked in armed expectation of attack."

While Columbus deserves condemnation for many of his actions, we should remember that his significance is in many ways symbolic. The point is not to focus exclusively on Columbus, but to criticize the political and economic forces which he both represented and encouraged.

When asked to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus, we should reply that we refuse to celebrate the European plunder of the Western Hemisphere's riches. We refuse to celebrate the European subjugation of the Western Hemisphere's native peoples. We refuse to celebrate the kidnapping and enslavement of millions of Africans.

There is only one thing we should celebrate: the 500 years of resistance to Columbus and the greed and cruelty that he represents. ❐

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a labor activist based in the Washington D.C area. He has been active in the African-American liberation movement for many years. The author would like to thank David Levine for his assistance on this article.

"If I Had Five Minutes To Spend With Students..."

Interview with LaDonna Harris

The following interview is with LaDonna Harris, president and executive director of Americans for Indian Opportunity, a national advocacy group based in Washington, D.C. Harris, 60, is a Comanche who has been active in Indian struggles as well as civil rights and women's issues. She was interviewed by Barbara Miner of Rethinking Schools.

What should be the perspective of teachers when discussing Columbus and Native Americans?

If I had five minutes to spend with students, one of the most important points I would make is that Indians are 500 different cultures in this country. We have different languages, different perspectives on life. And you can't be an Indian in a vacuum. You have to be a member of a tribe. And that tribe is a unique phenomenon with a specific social, political and economic order which makes it a particular culture. Comanches are different than Navajos, who are different than Cherokees.

Another thing that is very important. Indian tribes are autonomous political units of government. We are part of the federal system, not a part of the states. Our political relationship is not well known and little understood, which causes a great deal of problems.

What are some of the ways in which the legacies of Columbus continue into the present?

The predominant legacy is the Euro-centric culture in American society which states that history began with Europe. When in fact, the peoples of this earth and their respective cultures came from different places and thus should be honored and respected. As a Comanche, I grew up to believe that we should respect all cultures and peoples.

Are there any legacies that have particularly affected Native American women?

Women in Indian society were much stronger and more equal than Western society has depicted them. There's always that silly thing about the woman walking behind the man and all that nonsense.

In fact, many of the societies were matrilineal. Everyone was important and had their role. Within the social and political structure, the Comanches allowed you to be a strong individual so that you could contribute back to the tribe.

In traditional cultures, women were not treated in a demeaning or less than equal way.

What are some of the key contributions of native peoples?

Because native peoples did not have written documents, many of their contributions are not well known. But take the contributions to political philosophy, for example.

The wealth that came from this hemisphere changed the entire economic structure of Europe.

The Iroquois confederacy of different tribes influenced the thinking of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, and that influence is reflected in the U.S. Constitution. People borrowed from the philosophies of Indian people and made it their own. That's all right. But it would be nice if we had gotten some credit.

And of course you can go through the food chain. Where would the Irish be without the potato? Where would the Italians be without the tomato? Foods that are considered ethnic foods of Europe actually came from this continent. They were well developed, cultivated foods that revolutionized the food chain of the world.

Also, the wealth that came from this hemisphere — the gold and silver, the tobacco, cotton and sugar crops — changed the entire economic structure of Europe: from serfdom into industry. It's ironic that the wealth which came from the Indian people was so detrimental to them.

What are some of the ongoing contributions of native peoples?

I feel very strongly about the uniqueness of tribal society in the American system. We have much to offer discussions about the autonomy of different peoples within a larger political system. Look at Eastern Europe and the Middle East today, where people are crying out for more autonomy. This is an important discussion.

We should be able to discuss how you let those who are "different" from white Eurocentric America contribute their strengths to the larger society. Rather than seeing differences as a weakness and divisive to the society in general, American society should see these differences as a strength. The "browning of America" should be viewed as a strengthening of America rather than as a dividing of America.

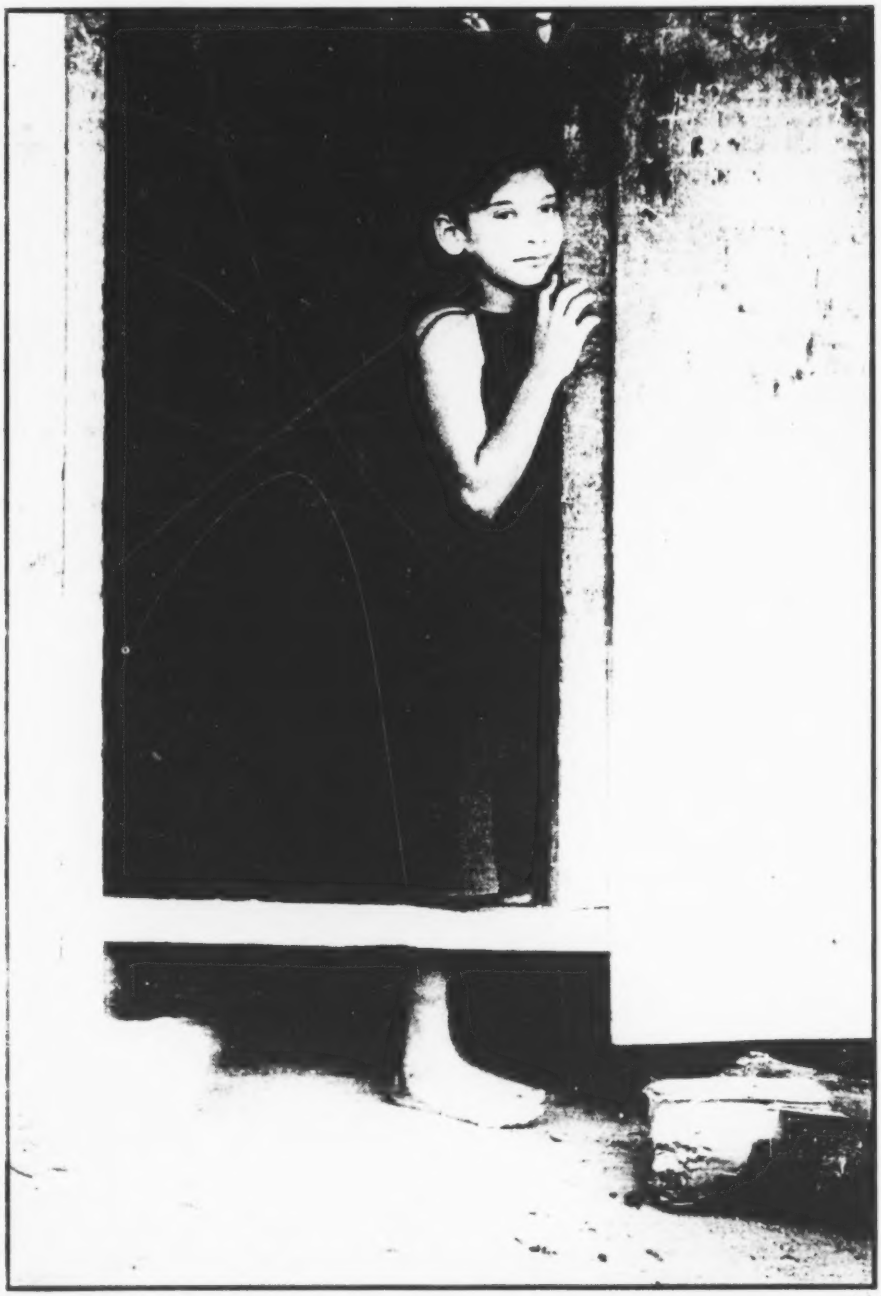
Ecologically, Indians also have much to contribute. I was brought up to believe in kinship relationships, not only to your relatives, but also to this earth. Thus, being an environmentalist is also part of being an Indian.

What are some of the particular strengths in native culture that have helped native peoples survive in the last 500 years?

The strength of Indian peoples, both individually and collectively, is in the tribe. We have something we can identify with, a collective strength. I can be here in Washington and know that I am a Comanche and am part of something bigger than myself. I have a sense of belonging, a sense of self, because within that community of people I know where I belong and how I fit in. ❐

La Raza: Product of Two Conquests

The following selection outlines the effect of the Spanish and U.S. conquests of what is now the southwestern United States, and the unique historical events that led to the development of the Chicano people. The selection is written by Andres G. Guerrero, a Chicano whose great-grandfather was a Cherokee. Guerrero adapted the selection from his book, A Chicano Theology, *published by Orbis Books.*



Credit: Tom Boswell

By Andres G. Guerrero

Conquest is at the ground of Chicano history. Two major conquests stand out. The first conquest was by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century; the second by the gringos in the nineteenth century. The history and personal identity of the Chicanos is shaped by these two conquests. Both conquests were so brutal that they left unforgettable memories upon the conquered. In a sense Chicanos are a by-product of these two historical conflicts.

The roots of Chicano history are in the sixteenth century conquest, when two cultures, two world views, and two world powers — the indigenous and the Spanish — merged violently. The Spanish conquistador married or raped the conquered Indian woman. The children born of this union were neither indigenous nor Spanish. Thus began a new race (*La Raza*), which had characteristics of both groups. At first these children had a difficult time; both groups rejected them. Neither the Spanish nor the indigenous wanted them. The Spaniards labeled these children *mestizos* — a mixture of Spanish and indigenous. This phenomenon of the New World was called *mestizaje*. This was not the first time *mestizaje* had occurred however.

From the beginning, these people had two names. The Spaniards called them *mestizos;* they called themselves *La Raza*. Both names mean the same thing. Today, Chicanos are *mestizos* and they call themselves *La Raza*. Chicano is the name we gave ourselves after the second conquest in the nineteenth century by the gringos. After this second conquest the gringo called us Mexican-American — a hyphenated name.

During the first conquest, the institution that was instrumental in bringing to reality the *mestizo* phenomenon was the Catholic Church. Once Native Americans were baptized, they were Christians and fell under the jurisdiction and protection of the church's laws. Under the church's sacraments, Spaniards and Native Americans, more positively this time, intermarried. In principle (thanks to the church), there was equality, but not in practice.

After the second conquest what had been almost half of Mexico's territory became the American Southwest. For a second time, we were a people conquered by outsiders. Once more a church with an alien clergy (the Native clergy was ousted or repressed) continued its sacramental tradition among the *mestizos*. *Mestizos* had resided in the South-

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Birth of the Mestizo

When he first came to the New World Cortés rejected an offer of land, stating, "I came to get gold, not till the soil like a peasant." It was his longing for gold and his audacity which determined that Cortés should be the conqueror of Mexico. However Cortés's defeat would only have put a stop to his own career. The conquest, part of the expansion of the Spanish empire, would have occurred anyway.

Seen from the side of the Indians, the conquest was a double tragedy: military defeat and the end of the Aztec empire. The feelings of the Aztecs were recorded by an Aztec poet of the conquest period:

Broken spears lie in the roads;
we have torn our hair in our grief.
The houses are roofless now, and their walls
are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas,
and the walls are spattered with gore.
The water has turned red, as if it were dyed,
and when we drink of it,
it has the taste of brine.

We have pounded our hands in despair
against the adobe walls,
for our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead.
The shields of our warriors were its defense,
but they could not save it.

We have chewed dry twigs and salt grasses;
we have filled our mouths with dust and bits of adobe;
we have eaten lizards, rats and worms....

In Mexico the conquest is now seen in much the same way as it was seen by the Indian poet of four centuries ago. Cortés, instead of being a national hero, is regarded as a ruthless invader. This feeling is shown by the conspicuous lack of his name on Mexican streets and monuments and by Diego Rivera's portrayal of him as a brutal killer in a mural in the National Palace. On the other hand, Montezuma and Cuauhtémoc are national heroes, and streets, monuments, and two of Mexico's most popular brands of beer bear their names. Perhaps the best summary of the conquest is on a plaque at the Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico City. Here the final battle of the conquest is commemorated with an inscription which concludes:

It was neither a victory nor a defeat. It was the painful birth of the mestizo people of today's Mexico.❐

Excerpted from Mexico in Transition *by Philip Russell, Colorado River Press.*

west since the Spanish conquest. They had built churches and sophisticated mission systems throughout the Southwest. In California, Texas, and New Mexico the church was strong and powerful. The Native Americans and the *mestizos* were oppressed but they managed to survive and sometimes to thrive....

Unlike the Native American, the Chicano population was not obliterated by genocidal practices. The nation of *mestizos* in Mexico was willing to migrate into the United States (still spiritually and psychologically their own land) to replace Chicanos who had been killed by gringos. Today, the Chicanos are the largest group of Hispanos in the United States. Many of them have direct roots to Native North American ancestry.

In Chicano history, the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo marks the transition between the first and second conquests.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed by the United States and Mexico, ended the Mexican-American war in 1848. The United States was given half of all the territory of Mexico, today's American Southwest. Within the territory handed over to the United States lived several thousand Mexican citizens. After one year, according to this treaty, these Mexican citizens could either remain in the occupied territory and become United States citizens or they could leave the conquered territory and remain Mexican citizens. According to Articles VIII, IX, and X (a Protocol was substituted for Article X), Mexicans would receive the protection of the United States government in the exercise of their civil and political rights. Land grants and property rights were to be honored by the new government. After the treaty was signed, the gringo political and military forces who occupied the Southwest reinforced the psychological, social, and economic captivity of the Chicanos.

The United States did not keep its treaty with Mexico. Many Chicanos suffered brutally under the gringo yoke after 1848. None of the demands for the protection of the Chicanos who stayed on their land was honored. Fraud, deceit, illegal taxation practices, lying, and cheating caused the Chicanos to lose their property within twelve years after the treaty was signed. The army of occupation situated itself strategically in order to insure that Chicanos remained poor, illiterate, landless, and without any representative rights whatsoever. Chicanos were to be captive strangers in their own land.

Since the United States made a mockery of the treaty when it came to the protection of the Chicanos, the Chicanos had to fend for themselves if they were to survive. I might add that Chicanos were not the first to experience broken treaties with the United States government....

Our *mestizo* ancestry is both Spanish and Native American. Historically, then, we are both oppressor (Spanish) and oppressed (Native American). Racially, we are both white (Spanish) and bronze (Native American). Economically, the Spanish gained power as they acquired the land; Native Americans lost power and became landless. We live in a gringo society, but our culture is Mexican. We have a gringo impulse (learned from the gringo), but our *corazón* is Latino. We relate to the impoverished world because of our oppression, but we live in a technological, industrial, affluent world. We embrace two world views in our reality, the European and the indigenous. As mestizos in the U.S. we are a synthesis of two great cultures: the Latin American and the Native North American. This synthesis is an emerging new way of life. ❐

Let's Leave Columbus Behind

By Hans Koning

graphic credit: Ricardo Levins Morales, huracán/ACD

It lies within our comfortable liberal tradition that we don't like events to be depicted in stark colors. We like shadings. We particularly don't like things or people to be written up as all bad. Everything has its nuances, we claim. Only fanatics and extremists fail to see that.

Mankind and womankind, sitting (still rather well-fed) in their (still rather well-heated) rooms, feel a considerable tenderness toward themselves.

Upperdog, mostly white, mankind, that is. And throughout its bloody history, mankind has labeled as fanatics, agitators, and troublemakers all those who have felt less tender and rosy about the world.

Well, fanatical and extreme as it may be, I find it very hard to think of any shadings or nuances in a character portrait of Christopher Columbus.

Grant him the originality and fierce ambition needed to set that western course. But what else is there to say? Here was a man greedy in large ways, and in small ways — to the point where he took for himself the reward for first sighting land from the Pinta lookout. Cruel in petty things, as when he set a dying monkey with two paws cut off to fight a wild pig; cruel on a continental scale, as when he set in motion what de las Casas called "the beginning of the bloody trail of conquest across the Americas."

We may try to redeem him by stating that he was a man of his time. That is certainly true. And it is to the greater glory of those men who were not "of their time": de las Casas, who in vain fought for half a century to save the Indians; Antonio de Montesinos, a Dominican friar who preached in Santo Domingo in 1511, "I am a voice crying in the wilderness." (He was recalled shortly thereafter.) It would be the lives of those very few men who would, if such were possible, save the honor of that Holy Faith in whose name a continental massacre was committed....

But men like these were pathetically few in number, and *still are*. The Spaniards cut off the hands of the Arawaks [Taínos] who didn't come in with enough gold. More than four hundred years later, Brazilian entrepreneurs cut off the ears of the Indians who didn't come in with enough wild rubber. The Spaniards threw the Indian children in the sea, shouting, "Boil in hell, children of the devil." The United States General Westmoreland announced, "An Oriental does not prize his life like we do." He used new and improved napalm, while the Spaniards in Hispaniola used green wood for burning the Indian caciques in order to make them suffer and scream longer — as an example for the others, of course.

In what is now the United States, the Indians were destroyed no less effectively than in Hispaniola. In Brazil, it is going on even now. Perhaps the only exceptions were the Indians of the Canadian wilderness; and only here was there no economic premium on their extermination....

The curse of the conquest still lies over most of Latin America. Here the *encomiendas* continue in a more subtle form, and the very few still own the very many.

South of the United States border, October 12 is now commemorated as "the day of the race." The race, that is, as it now exists, of mixed Spanish and Indian and African stock.

You cannot find fault with that. That race, *la raza*, is a reality. These children of conquerors and slaves are the only achievement of the conquest, the only wealth it produced. For all the gold and silver stolen and shipped to Spain did not make the Spanish people richer. It gave their kings an edge in the balance of power for a time, a chance to hire more mercenary soldiers for their wars. They ended up losing those wars, anyways, and all that was left was a deadly inflation, a starving population, the rich richer, the poor poorer, and a ruined peasant class.

Perhaps in the children of *la raza* lies the hope for a final reconciliation of this war that Europe and its white outposts have waged on America and Africa.

But we up north, we call October 12 "Columbus Day." Are we committed then to continue in that bloody track? Shouldn't we try to have our thoughts, on the anniversary of the day it all began, run in a new direction? Shouldn't we change that name?

Our false heroes have long burdened our history and our character.

Shouldn't we wind up that Enterprise of Columbus and start thinking of a truly New World?❐

Hans Koning is the author of a number of fiction and non-fiction books, including I Know What I'm Doing, Acts of Faith, *and* A New Yorker in Egypt.

The above is excerpted from the final chapter of Columbus: His Enterprise, *Monthly Review Press.*

George Washington

Speculator in Native Lands

The selection below outlines some of George Washington's activities against Native Americans. The selection is particularly useful to balance information given to students during Washington's Birthday celebrations in February. It is based on historical documents as reported in "The Writings of George Washington," edited by John C. Fitzpatrick and from Charles A. Beard's "An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution."

George Washington fought native peoples during the "French and Indian War." As payment he received thousands of acres of native peoples' land on the south bank of the Ohio River — land given him by the British, not by the native people who lived on the land. He also owned shares in the Mississippi Company, a land speculation group that "held" 2.5 million acres of native land in the Ohio Valley. Native people still lived there and had never given it to the Company.

Washington was a slaveholder (at the time of his death, in 1799, he held 317 Black people in slavery.) Like other large plantation owners, he was often in debt to British merchants. To help meet this debt, he and others speculated in (bought and sold) native lands, as a way of making quick profits. Because much of the land in the 13 colonies was in large estates, common people who wanted to buy land were encouraged to "settle" west of the Alleghenies, paying the land speculators handsome profits, while the native people, whose land it was, received nothing and lost their lands.

In 1763, the great leader of the Ottawa nation, Pontiac, united 18 native nations to fight this white invasion of their lands. The confederacy he formed almost defeated the British. In an effort to stop such fighting, the British King issued the Proclamation of 1763. It said that no more white settlements could go west of the Allegheny mountains and demanded that white settlements already there "forthwith...remove themselves."

This action threatened the financial interests of Washington and other wealthy colonists (like Patrick Henry and Benjamin Franklin) who had bought land in the forbidden area. But the King's Proclamation didn't stop Washington. He employed a surveyor to secretly locate more valuable land for him. Washington wrote to a friend:

Between ourselves, [the restrictions should be viewed] as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians....Any person, therefore who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands...will never regain it.

At his death, Washington "owned" 40,000 acres of Native American land west of the Alleghenies.

Because of the activities of men like Washington, most native nations decided not to support the colonists in their struggle against Britain. But Britain, too, had a record of breaking promises made to native nations. That is why many of them, like the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, tried to remain neutral during the Revolutionary War. However, the British used lies to trick some warriors from the Confederacy into fighting for them at the battle of Fort Stanwix. In retaliation, George Washington ordered a military campaign against the Iroquois Confederacy. On May 31, 1779, Washington wrote to General Sullivan:

The expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians with their associates and adherents. The immediate object is their total destruction and devastation and the capture of as many persons of every age and sex as possible.

It will be essential to ruin their crops now on the ground, and prevent their planting more....

Parties should be detached to lay waste all settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be merely overrun, but destroyed....

The records of the destruction by General Sullivan report that:

The force under Col. Daniel Brodhead burned 11 towns, containing about 165 houses, which for the most part were constructed of logs and framed timber. They destroyed more than 500 acres of cultivated land, and took loot estimated at $30,000. Many homes were large and beautifully painted, with architecture that impressed the officers.

As Sullivan wrote in his official report:

The quantity of corn destroyed might amount to 160,000 bushels, with vast quantities of vegetables of every kind....We have not left a single settlement or field of corn in the country of the Five Nations, nor is there even the appearance of an Indian on this side of the Niagara. ❐

From Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes, *Council on Interracial Books for Children.*

Ottawa Chief Pontiac, born in Ohio around 1720, organized 18 native nations to resist the white invasion.

Maps: Taking Europe Off Center Stage

By Ward L. Kaiser

Recently a university professor asked his students to rank certain countries by size. Included in the list were France, Germany, Great Britain, Brazil, Italy and Japan. Overwhelmingly, Brazil was put last, though it was actually the largest country on the list. Similarly, students rated the Soviet Union larger than the continent of Africa, though it is in fact much smaller.

These results point to at least two underlying realities. First, we associate geographical size with a country's perceived power. Second, the maps that shape our view of the world have seriously distorted our understandings. Such countries as Great Britain, Germany and the U.S.S.R. are often visualized as larger than they are because traditional maps show them that way.

Help, fortunately, is at hand. A new world map, based on newer and more accurate principles, has been developed. It presents every area, every country, every continent in its true scale. The new map is called the Peters Projection World Map.

The world map most of us are familiar with is based on Mercator's Projection of 1569. Gerhard Kremer — whose name in Latin was Mercator — lived in Flanders and Germany during the age of European expansion when European sailors needed a world map for navigation. Mercator provided such a map. Leaving aside the question of the accuracy of the information Mercator worked with, the map he prepared immediately gave rise to problems since no rounded surface (the world) can be transferred to a flat surface (a map) without some adjustment.

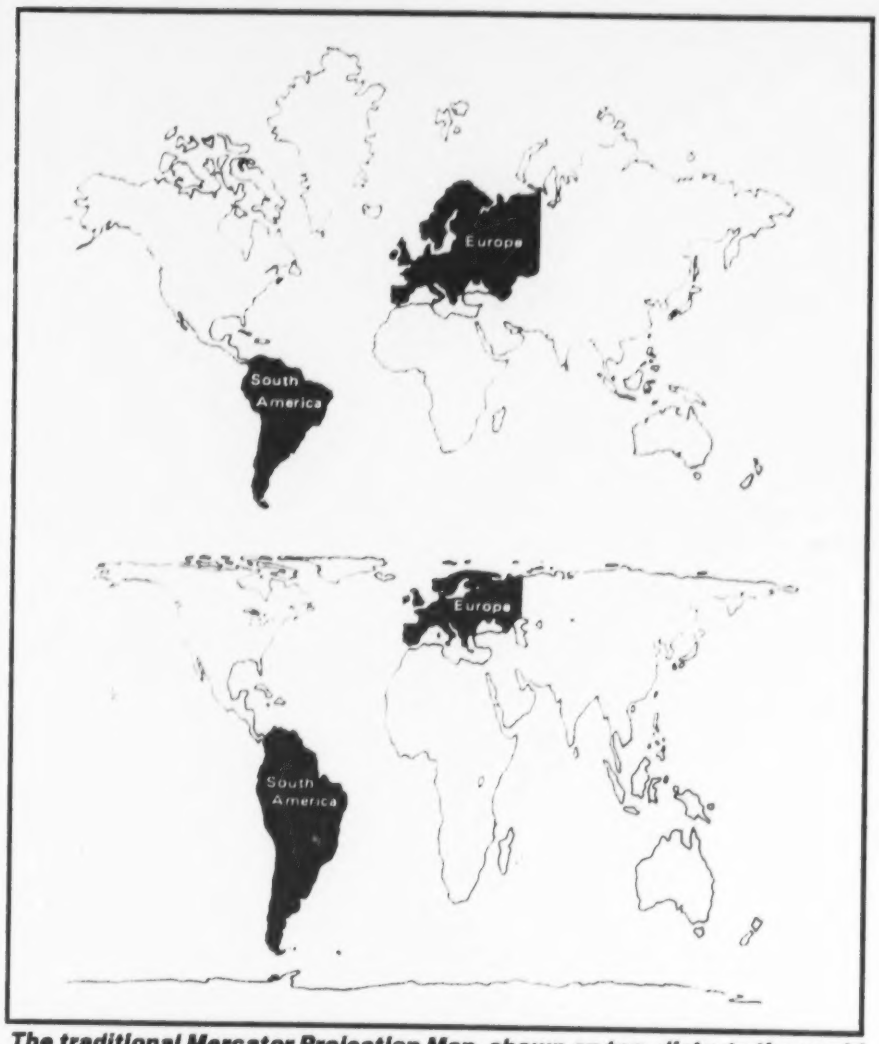
Mercator maps are accurate for distance only on the equator; distortion begins immediately north or south of that line and increases steadily with every degree of latitude.

Mercator set the equator not in the middle of his map, but two-thirds of the way down. This had two immediate results: it cut off much of the Southern Hemisphere, including the fourth largest land mass (Antarctica) and it set what is now Germany at the optical center of the map, even though it belongs in the top quarter of the earth's surface. By conscious or unconscious design, those areas of the world then inhabited primarily by whites were enlarged and centered.

The new world map was developed by Dr. Arno Peters, Director of the Institute for Universal History in Bremen, Germany.

Peters first published the mathematical basis for the new map projection in 1967; in 1974 he was invited to present his findings to the German Cartographical Society, and in the same year he published the World Map in German. The first English version appeared in 1983. Originally known as the "Orthogonal" Projection, it has more recently been known by its creator's name — the Peters Projection.

Although the Peters Maps has not yet achieved total acceptance, it is making great strides. It has strong support from United Nations Development Program and UNICEF. Because of its "fairness to all peoples" it is used by many church organizations, including the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. The Peters Map has also been selected by several TV networks in Europe as the backdrop for world news broadcasts. ❐



The traditional Mercator Projection Map, shown on top, distorts the world to the advantage of European Colonial powers. The Peters Projection (lower) gives a more accurate view.

Ward L. Kaiser, Executive Director of Friendship Press, is the publisher of the Peters Projection Map in English.

This article was adapted from an article in Rethinking Schools, *Vol. 5, Number 4. Reprinted from* Interracial Books for Children Bulletin.

Rethinking Terminology

By Philip Tajitsu Nash and Emilienne Ireland

Think about the people in your hometown. Is there any adjective that describes them all? Are they, without exception, honest, wild, immoral, spiritual, ignorant, hostile, generous, brutal or noble?

Are they all baseball fanatics or beer drinkers? Uniformly kind to strangers? Talkative or quiet?

Sure, you may be able to come up with a few generalizations. But it would make no sense to describe them as a group in terms of personality traits, moral values, or even physical appearance.

With this in mind, think about the words used to describe the events of 1492, and to refer to Europeans and Native Americans in general. You may find that the words you use reveal hidden assumptions or biases.

People and cultures

Many words used to describe peoples and cultures implicitly compare one group with another. What do we really mean by terms such as "primitive culture" or "simple society?" In what ways are the communitites "primitive" or "simple"? Why is it that words with such negative connotations are used to describe some societies and not others? Do we mean merely that their material technology is less complicated and less expensive to produce than that of modern-day industrial societies?

No human society is "primitive" or "simple." Every society is primitive in some ways and complex in others.

If we put aside our fascination with technology and material wealth, we may find that for many people in U.S. and European societies today, life is primitive and stunted in terms of family values, spiritual life, commitment to the community and opportunities for rewarding work and creative self-expression. These are the very areas most richly developed in traditional Native American communities.

Nor can traditional Native American life be called "simple" or "primitive" in an intellectual sense. A typical elder of the Wauja people in the Amazon rain forest, for example, has memorized hundreds of sacred songs and stories; plays several musical instruments; and knows the habits and habitats of hundreds of forest animals, birds, and insects, as well as the medicinal uses of local plants. He can guide his sons in building a two-story tall house using only axes, machetes, and materials from the forest. He is an expert agronomist. He speaks several languages fluently; knows precisely how he is related to several hundred of his closest kin; and has acquired sufficient wisdom to share his home peacefully with in-laws, cousins, children, and grandchildren. Female elders are comparably learned and accomplished.

Other phrases to watch out for include Stone Age, trapped in time, prehistoric, timeless, and ancient. All imply that cultures and people never change, that they no longer exist, or that they are somehow inferior or backward. And words such as warlike, bloodthirsty or treacherous do not ask whether a group resorted to war in self-defense.

Implicit assumptions and biases also affect geographic terms. The earth was all formed at one time, so why is one hemisphere called old and the other new? Why do we choose Greenwich, England to serve as the center of the earth, determining East and West? (This is also related to the words oriental, "from where the sun rises" in Latin, and occidental, "from where it sets").

Since it is universally agreed that Native Americans were around before Columbus, why do phrases such as "uninhabited land", "virgin land", and "unknown land" persist? Do terms such as "untamed land" and "unproductive land" imply that deforestation and agriculture are the only suitable ways to use land?

Maps also reveal biases. For example, the Mercator Projection Map is useful for sailing, but distorts geography. It makes the top half of the world two-thirds of the map — subtly but surely sending the message that the southern hemisphere is less important.

Popular descriptions of the events of 1492 are often one-sided. Seemingly neutral terms such as "encounter" and "discovery" are less painful to European Americans than the words some Native Americans would prefer: genocide, murder, rape, butchery, or conquest.

"Civilizing" or "Christianizing" a people presumes that their own society and religion are inferior. Calling the European conquerors "courageous" or "far-sighted" justifies their actions. Saying that European atrocities in the Western Hemisphere were "unavoidable" (or that the perpetrators of genocide were only "products of their time") dulls our sense of injustice regarding events both past and present.

In articles written for Rethinking Columbus, we have tried to be sensitive to such biases.

We have tried not to use the term New World, for that implies that somehow the Western Hemisphere was formed after Europe or Asia, or that history began with the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. Because no geographically or politically neutral term is widely accepted for this section of the globe, we have generally used the term Western Hemisphere or the Americas.

We have also tried to be sensitive to how Native Americans refer to themselves. When appropriate, cultures and peoples have been defined as narrowly as possible, so that specific names such as Apache or Wauja have been used.

We encourage readers to think about the implicit assumptions of words. Ask yourself how people refer to themselves before describing them to someone else. Whose point of view is represented in the terms you are using? Whose point of view is left out, minimized or distorted?

Rethinking our terminology is essential to developing analytical minds. As we approach the Columbus Quincentenary, we must teach our children to respect all peoples, and to celebrate humanity rather than its destruction. ❐

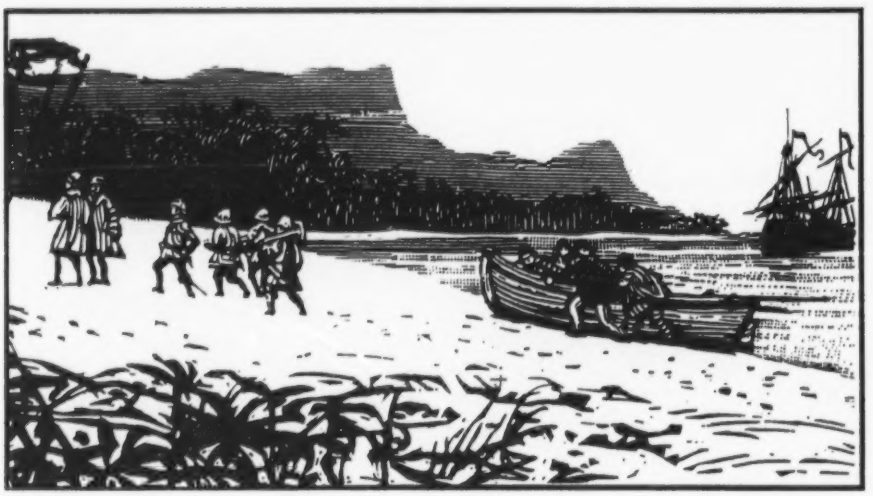
"Civilizing" or "Christianizing" a people presumes that their own society and religion are inferior.

Phil Tajitsu Nash is a board member of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and a professor at City University of New York Law School.

Emilienne Ireland is a co-founder of the Amazon Network.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

Timeline: Spain, Columbus and Native Americans



Credit: Lina De Freitas

Approximately 13,000 B.C.: First known human beings live in the Caribbean.

Approximately 8 B.C.: The people who call themselves Taíno, or "men of good," arrive in the region. With great care for the earth, the Taínos are able to feed millions of people. No one in a community goes hungry. They play sports and recite poetry. They are great inventors and travel from island to island. One Spanish priest reported that he never saw two Taínos fighting.

There are frequent skirmishes between Taínos and Caribs on nearby islands, but these threaten neither civilization.

1451: Columbus is born probably in the Italian port city, Genoa. At the time of his birth, there may be as many as 70 to 100 million people living in what will one day be called the Americas. They are of many nationalities, with perhaps 2,000 different languages.

1453: Constantinople (now Istanbul) falls to the Ottoman Turks who make it the capital of their empire. For European merchants, trade with Asia becomes more difficult.

1455: Christian Castile [Spain] begins attacks on Granada in Andulasia, the last province under Arab/Islamic rule in Spain. The Arabs (called "Moors" by European Christians) had ruled the Iberian peninsula for eight centuries.

1471: About this time, Columbus first goes to sea on a Genoese ship.

1483: Under King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Inquisition intensifies in the Christian-reconquered areas of Spain. The Inquisition aims at rooting out Muslims and Jews who had converted to Christianity but whose conversion the Inquisition deems insincere. Before it is over, three centuries later, thousands will die, with an estimated three million people driven into exile.

1484: Columbus first presents his idea to the king of Portugal for reaching the Indies by sailing west. The plan is rejected, not because the king's advisors don't believe the world is round, but because they think Columbus's estimate of the distance is way too small.

1486: Columbus first proposes a western voyage to Queen Isabella, whose advisors postpone any recommendation.

1488: Columbus appeals again to the Portuguese king. At the same time, Bartolomé Dias claims Africa can be rounded by sea to get to the Indies. This eliminates Portugal's interest in looking for a westward route.

1490: Queen Isabella's advisors urge the queen to reject Columbus's proposal. But Isabella keeps Columbus on the royal payroll, offering him hope his proposal will eventually be granted.

Jan. 2, 1492: The Arab rulers and their court surrender in Granada. According to the surrender agreement, the inhabitants of Muslim Spain have until the beginning of 1495 to decide between living under Christian rule and exile. Those who choose to stay begin to feel the threat of the Inquisition immediately, and in 1498 official inquisitors come, and forced conversions to Christianity begin en masse.

March 30, 1492: Ferdinand and Isabella order all Jews to leave Spain.

April, 1492: Ferdinand and Isabella agree to Columbus's westward voyage to the Indies. They also agree to his demands: 10% of all the wealth returned to Spain, the title of Admiral of the Ocean Sea, governor and viceroy of all the territory he discovers. All these titles are to be inherited by his heirs.

Aug. 2, 1492: Deadline for Jews to leave Spain. Between 120,000 and 150,000 are forced out, able to take only what they can carry. They must leave all their gold, silver, jewels and money for the King and Queen.

Aug. 3, 1492: Columbus departs from Palos instead of the port of Cadiz, which is filled with ships taking some 8,000 Jews into exile.

Oct. 12, 1492: Juan Rodriguez Bermejo, a sailor on the Pinta, shouts, "Land, Land!" Columbus later claims he first spotted land and thus will collect the lifetime pension promised. The ships arrive at the island, Guanahaní, where Columbus takes possession of the island for Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus receives presents from the people he encounters and gives them some red caps, glass beads, and "many other things of little value."

The first thing he tries to ask the people is "if they had gold."

October 14: Columbus's thoughts turn to slavery: "... When Your Highnesses so command, they [the Indians] can be carried off to

Castile or held captive in the island itself, since with 50 men they would be all kept in subjection and forced to do whatever may be wished."

November 12: Columbus kidnaps 10 Taínos: My men "brought seven head of women, small and large, and three children."

November 17: Two of his capuves escape.

December 9: Columbus sails into the harbor of the island the Taíno people call Bohio. Its plains are "the loveliest in the world" and remind Columbus of Spain. He calls the island Española.

October/November/December: Columbus's every move is determined by where he believes he can find gold. On December 23 he writes in his journal: "Our Lord in His Goodness guide me that I may find this gold, I mean their mine, for I have many here who say they know it." Still, by mid-December Columbus has found very little gold.

December 25: Columbus's ship, the Santa Maria, hits rocks off Española. He is forced to abandon it. The Taíno cacique (leader), Guacanagarí, weeps when he hears of the shipwreck. Taínos help unload the ship "without the loss of a shoe string." "They are," Columbus writes, "a people so full of love and without greed... I believe there is no better race or better land in the world."

December 26: Realizing he will have to leave men behind, Columbus orders a fort and tower built. He writes that it is necessary to make the Indians realize that they must serve Spain's king and queen "with love and fear."

January 2, 1493: Columbus prepares to leave Bohio. He leaves behind 39 men and orders them "to discover the mine of gold."

January 13: First reported skirmish between Spaniards and Indians: After landing on an island to trade for bows, Columbus writes that many Indians prepared "to assault the Christians and capture them." The Spaniards "fell upon" them, "they gave an Indian a great slash on the buttocks and they wounded another in the breast with an arrow." Columbus believes that these people were "Carib and that they eat men [though he offers no evidence]." He regrets he didn't capture some to take back to Spain.

February 15: Columbus returns with relatively little of value. In a letter written aboard ship, Columbus lies, saying that on Española, "there are many spices and great mines of gold and of other metals."

Mid-April: Columbus welcomed by Ferdinand and Isabella. They begin planning his second voyage. Of the six Indians brought to Spain, one would stay and die in two years. The others would leave with Columbus for Española and three would die enroute.

May 28, 1493: The king and queen confirm that Columbus, his sons and his heirs will be Admiral and Viceroy and Governor of the islands and mainland discovered "now and forever."

Approximately September/October 1493: The men left behind at La Navidad brutally mistreat the Taínos. They steal, take slaves and rape women. In response, the Taíno cacique, Caonabó, kills all the Spaniards on the island.

Sept. 25, 1493: Columbus's second voyage begins. His fleet includes 17 ships and between 1200 and 1500 men (no women). Pressure is high for Columbus to make good on his promises. At least some of the money to finance the voyage comes from wealth taken away from Spanish Jews.

November 3, 1493: Columbus lands on Dominica. On Guadeloupe, his men go ashore "looting and destroying all they found," according to Columbus's son, Fernando. They capture 12 "very beautiful and plump" teenage Taíno girls.

Mid-November: Columbus's crew trap a small group of Caribs in a harbor at what is now St. Croix. In defense, the Indians shoot arrows at the Spaniards, killing one and wounding one. The Indians are caught, and one is horribly mutilated, then killed, by the Spaniards.

November 28: Columbus finds the fort at La Navidad burned.

Early February, 1494: Columbus sends 12 of the 17 ships back to Spain for supplies. Several dozen Indian slaves are taken aboard — "men and women and boys and girls," he writes. He justifies this by writing that they are cannibals and thus slavery will more readily "secure the welfare of their souls."

Columbus recommends to the king and queen that supplies needed in the Indies could be paid for in slaves, "well made and of very good intelligence," and that slave shipments could be taxed to raise money for Spain. Spanish priest Bartolomé de Las Casas later writes that claims of cannibalism are used to "excuse the violence, cruelty, plunder and slaughter committed against the Indians every day."

Feb/March: In Isabella, Spaniards are dying of disease, and there is less food everyday. Columbus uses violence against Spaniards who disobey his orders to work. Any Spaniard found hiding gold is "well whipped." Colonist Michele de Cuneo writes that "Some had their ears slit and some the nose, very pitiful to see." Many blame Columbus, governor of the island, for their problems. Demoralized, many want to leave.

Late March/early April: Columbus is told that Indians are leaving their villages and that the cacique, Caonabó, is preparing to attack the fort at Isabella. Las Casas writes that Columbus "ordered Alonso de Hojeda to lead a squadron by land to the fort of Santo Tomas and spread terror among the Indians

Credit: Lima De Freitas

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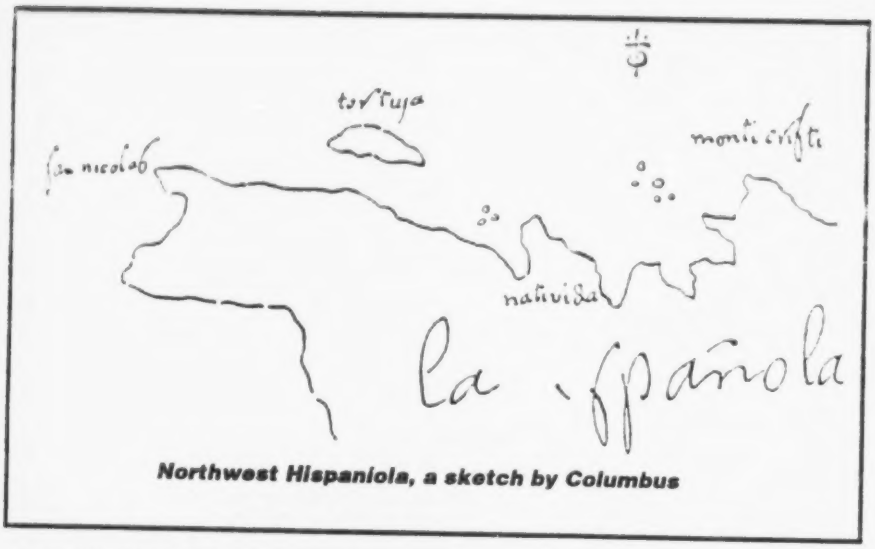

Northwest Hispaniola, a sketch by Columbus

in order to show them how strong and powerful the Christians were."

April 9, 1494: Hojeda takes 400 men inland, captures a cacique and some relatives, accuses one of theft and has his ears publicly cut off. When Hojeda returns to Isabella with these and other prisoners, Columbus orders a crier to announce their public decapitation. Las Casas comments, "What a pretty way to promote justice, friendship, and make the Faith appealing — to capture a King in his own territory and sentence him, his brother and his nephew to death, for no fault of their own!"

April 24, 1494: Columbus leaves Isabella to seek the mainland of the Indies.

Spring 1494: Columbus explores the coast of Jamaica. Andres Bernaldez, accompanying Columbus, writes of the island's "extreme beauty." Columbus sets loose a vicious dog against the Indians. Bernaldez writes that it "did them great damage, for a dog is the equal of 10 men against the Indians."

June 12, 1494: Columbus, off the coast of Cuba, believes he has reached the mainland. The next day he begins his return to Española.

September 14: Columbus reaches the southern coast of Española. Instead of returning to Isabella, Columbus heads to Puerto Rico to raid for Carib slaves. However, he becomes ill and his officers return the ships to Isabella.

November 1494: Returning to Spain, mutineers against Columbus complain to the king and queen. They say there is no gold and that the enterprise is a joke.

February 1495: Columbus must be desperate to prove that his "enterprise" can be profitable. He rounds up 1600 Taínos — the same people he had earlier described as "so full of love and without greed." Some 550 of them — "among the best males and females," writes colonist Michele de Cuneo — are chained and taken to ships to be sent to Spain as slaves. "Of the rest who were left," writes Cuneo, "the announcement went around that whoever wanted them could take as many as he pleased; and this was done."

1495: Columbus establishes the tribute system. Every Taíno, 14 or older, is required to fill a hawk's bell full of gold every 3 months. Those who comply are given copper tokens to wear around their necks. Where Columbus decides there is little gold, 25 pounds of spun cotton is required. The Spaniards cut the hands off those who do not comply; they are left to bleed to death. As Las Casas writes, the tribute is "impossible and intolerable."

Columbus will soon replace the tribute system with outright slavery, though the Queen will rule that Indians forced to work must be paid "wages." It is called the encomienda system, in which colonists are simply granted land and numbers of Taínos.

March 24, 1495: Columbus, and his brothers Diego and Bartolomé, who had arrived earlier, send an armed force to the mountains to put down Taíno resistance to Spanish brutality. The force includes 200 soldiers in full armor, 20 vicious dogs and 20 mounted cavalry. The Spaniards confront a large number of Taínos in a valley 10 miles south of Isabella, attack them and, according to Columbus's son, "with God's aid soon gained a complete victory, killing many Indians and capturing others who were also killed."

October 1495: Responding to reports of Columbus's misrule, the king and queen send an investigator to Española.

March 1496: Columbus departs for Spain. Two ships make the journey. Onto them, Columbus forces 30 Taíno prisoners, including the cacique, Caonabó, who led the first resistance to Spanish rule in Española. It takes 3 months to make the voyage. Caonabó dies enroute; no one knows how many others also die. Columbus arrives and awaits an answer from the king and queen to his request for a third voyage.

July 1496: Ferdinand and Isabella agree to see Columbus. He sets out for Burgos with his Taíno slaves. Columbus promises to locate the mainland so that it will come under Spanish rather than Portuguese control. The king and queen will not agree to Columbus's plans for almost two years.

May 30, 1498: Columbus's third voyage begins. Three ships head directly for Española, another three, with Columbus, travel farther south.

July 31, 1498: Columbus sails past and names Trinidad. He saw what is today Venezuela, but didn't realize that it was the mainland.

Mid-August 1498: Columbus lands in Española. The admiral finds a rebellion against his brothers' rule. He backs down and offers amnesty to anyone who will return to Spain or will accept free land.

1500: By now the Spaniards have established at least seven forts in Española and at least 340 gallows.

August 1500: The king and queen, upset over the negative reports of Columbus's bad government, though not his mistreatment of Taínos, sends a commissioner to take charge in Española. The commissioner arrives amid another uprising against the Columbus brothers. He arrests them and in October sends them to Spain for trial.

Late October: Columbus arrives in Cadiz in chains. A few months later, he presents his case to the king and queen. He demands he be reinstated governor. He will make one more voyage but will never regain his power.

May 20, 1506: Columbus dies in Valladolid, Spain.

1542: Bartolomé de las Casas writes that a mere 200 Taínos still live in Española. One scholar recently estimated that perhaps more than 3 million Taínos lived there when Columbus first arrived. ❐

Compiled by Bill Bigelow

Sources: Cecil Jane, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus;* Benjamin Keen, ed., *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus by His Son Ferdinand;* Hans Koning, *Columbus: His Enterprise;* Bartolomé de las Casas, *History of the Indies;* Milton Meltzer, *Columbus and the World Around Him;* Samuel Eliot Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea;* Kirkpatrick Sale, *Conquest of Paradise;* The Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services.

For the Love of Gold

Spaniards chopping off the hands of Indians who failed to meet the gold dust quota.

One thought preoccupied Columbus after he landed on the islands of the Caribbean. Gold. Following are entries from his journal for his first voyage which underscore this preoccupation and expose the profit-motives which guided his journeys.The excerpts are from The Journal of Christopher Columbus, *translated by Cecil Jane.*

October 13, 1492: And I was attentive and labored to know if they [the Indians] had gold, and I saw that some of them wore a small piece hanging from a hole which they have in the nose, and from signs I was able to understand that, going to the south or going round the island to the south, there was a king who had large vessels of it and possessed much gold.

October 16: This island is very large, and I am resolved to round it, because as far as I can understand, there is in it or near it a gold mine.

October 17: I desired to take the route to the south-south-east, because in that direction, as all the Indians whom I have with me say and as another indicated, towards the south, lies the island which they call Samoet, where there is gold.

October 19: Tomorrow I wish to go so far inland to find the village and to see or have speech with this king, who, according to the signs which these men make, rules all these neighboring islands and is clothed and wears on his person much gold.

October 21: According to whether I shall find a quantity of gold or spices, I shall decide what is to be done.

October 23: I see that here there is no gold mine... I say that it is not right to delay, but to go on our way and to discover much land, until a very profitable land is reached.

November 12: So Your Highnesses should resolve to make them Christians, for I believe that, if you begin, in a little while you will achieve the conversion of a great number of peoples to our holy faith, with the acquisition of great lordships and riches and all their inhabitants for Spain. For without doubt there is a very great amount of gold in these lands, so that it is not without reason that these Indians, whom I carry with me, say that there are places in these islands where they dig gold and wear it around their necks, in the ears, and on the arms and legs, and that there are very large bracelets, pearls of great value and an infinite amount of spices.

December 3: Whatever they [the Indians] have they give at once for anything that may be given to them, without saying that it is little, and I believe that they would do so with spices and gold, if they had any.

December 12: I had given orders that they [my men] should take some [Indians on Española], treat them well and make them lose their fear, that some gain might be made, since, considering the beauty of the land, it could not be but that there was gain to be got.

December 23: Our Lord in His Goodness guide me that I may find this gold, I mean their mine, for I have many here who say they know it.

December 29: There is so much [gold] and in so many places, and in this island of Española itself that it is a wonder.

January 6, 1493: Sovereign Princes, I realize that Our Lord miraculously ordained that the ship should remain there [at La Navidad], because it is the best place in all the island [of Española] for forming a settlement and nearest to the mines of gold."

January 10: More honor and favor ought to be done to the people [on Española], since in this island there is so much gold and good land and spices. ❐

The Spanish Fight for Justice in the Indies

Not all Spanish supported the conquest of native peoples in the Americas. A staunch critic of Spanish brutality, the priest Bartolomé de las Casas wrote the "History of the Indies" in 1542. The following is adapted from that history, and tells of incidents in the city of Santo Domingo on the Sunday before Christmas in 1511.

The whole city of Santo Domingo was to be there, including the admiral Diego Columbus [son of Christopher Columbus], and all the royal officials. Each of them had been individually notified by the Dominicans to come and hear a sermon of great importance. They readily accepted, some because they respected the friars; others, because they were curious to hear what was to be said that concerned them so much. Had they known what the sermon was to be about they would have refused to come and would have attacked it.

At the appointed time, fray Antonio de Montesinos went to the pulpit and announced the topic of the sermon: *Ego vox clamantis in deserto* [a voice crying in the desert.] After some introductory words about Advent, he told those present that the conscience of the Spaniards was sterile like the desert. The Spaniards on Hispaniola live in a state of blindness, in danger of damnation, sunk in the waters of insensitivity and drowning without being aware of it. Then he said: "I have come here in order to declare it unto you, I the voice of Christ in the desert of this island. Open your hearts and your senses, all of you, for this voice will speak new things harshly, and will be frightening." For a good while the voice spoke in such punitive terms that the congregation trembled as if facing Judgment Day. "This voice," he continued, "says that you are living in deadly sin for the atrocities you tyrannically impose on these innocent people [the Indians]. Tell me, what right have you to enslave them? What authority did you use to make war against them who lived at peace on their territories, killing them cruelly with methods never before heard of? How can you oppress them and not care to feed or cure them, and work them to death to satisfy your greed? And why don't you look after their spiritual health, so that they should come to know God, that they should be baptized, and that they should hear Mass and keep the holy days? Aren't they human beings? Have they no rational soul? Aren't you obliged to love them as you love yourselves? Don't you understand? How can you live in such a dream?"

The voice had astounded them all; some reacted as if they had lost their senses. Some were petrified and others showed signs of repentance. But not one was really convinced., After his sermon, fray Montesinos descended from the pulpit holding his head straight, as if unafraid — he wasn't the kind of man to show fear — for much was at stake in displeasing the audience by speaking what had to be said. He went on to his thin cabbage soup and the straw house of his Dominican Order accompanied by a friend.

When they had left, the congregation began such whispering that they could not finish the Mass. You can imagine that they didn't sit around reading after dinner that day. And they must not have enjoyed the meal either since they hurried to meet at the house of Admiral Diego Columbus, the discoverer's son. They decided to criticize and frighten the preacher and his companions. They wanted to punish this man who condemned them for using the Indians that the King himself had given them.

Tell me what right you have to enslave the Indians? To war against them?

A group of them went to the friars' house. The porter opened the door and they asked to see the superior. Father fray Pedro de Cordoba came alone to meet them. They demanded to see the preacher. Fray Cordoba answered that as a prelate he could speak for all his friars. The men insisted on speaking to fray Montesinos, but fray Cordoba evaded their demands and spoke to them seriously and carefully. His words gave off an air of authority. Finally the Admiral Diego Columbus and the other royal officials began to change their tone. They softened and begged fray Cordoba to please bring fray Montesinos to them because they wanted to question him about why he had preached a sermon that went against the King and damaged the residents of the island.

When the holy man saw that they had become more respectful, he called fray Antonio de Montesinos, who came with a great deal of fright. After all were seated, the admiral asked how dare he say they couldn't use the Indians given them by the King, that they were acquired at the cost of so much difficulty in wars against the infidel. The sermon was a scandal, the admiral said, and demanded that fray Montesinos take it all back. Otherwise, they would take needed measures. Fray Montesinos answered that what he had preached was the result of a great deal of thought and was the opinion of all the friars. He said the Indians were becoming extinct and that they were as uncared for as beasts in the fields, and that it was up to the friars to save the souls of both Spaniards and Indians on the Island. As Christians and as preachers of the Truth, fray Montesinos said, it was their duty to serve the King faithfully by doing whatever was necessary to save souls. And that once the King was informed of what was happening, he would thank them for their service.

Fray Montesinos's justification of his sermon fell on dead ears. If they were to satisfy their thirst for gold they couldn't stop the tyranny against the Indians, for without Indians the Spaniards had no way to get the gold. They decided right then to demand a retraction on the following Sunday. Blindness drove them to the point of threatening to send the friars back to Spain if they didn't agree. The superior answered that, "Surely, this could be easily done." And this was true, for besides their coarse clothes, they owned nothing except a rough blanket for the night. They slept on straw pads held up by X-shaped supports. As for their other possessions, these would easily fit in two trunks.

When the admiral and the others realized that the threats did not bring results, they softened again and asked them to consider preaching another sermon which in some way would satisfy a scandalized town. The friars, in order to end these demands and get rid of the men, agreed that the same fray Montesinos would preach the following Sunday and would do his best to satisfy them and clarify things. Once this was agreed upon, they went home happily.

The news that the following Sunday friar Montesinos would take back his previous sermon spread quickly. No one needed an invitation to be in church come Sunday. Fray Antonio de Montesinos went to the pulpit and read a theme from Job 36: "From the beginning I shall repeat my knowledge and my truth and I will show my words of last Sunday, that so embittered you, to be true." The congregation was quick to sense the tone of the sermon and sat there itching to stop him. The friar backed up his sermon with supporting evidence and gave more reasons to condemn the tyranny of Spanish oppression as illegal. He stressed the point that in no way could a Spaniard save his soul if he persisted in that state. He asked them to mend their ways and said that his Order would refuse to give confession to anyone except travellers. They could publicize this and they could write to anyone they pleased in Castile [Spain], because the friars knew for certain this was the only way to serve both God and the King. After fray Montesinos left, the people grumbled in indignation, frustrated in their hopes that the friar would deny what he had said — as if taking it back could change the law of God which they violated by oppressing Indians.

The Spaniards left church in a state of rage and again salted their meal that day with bitterness. They decided not to bother again with the friars who had proved useless. They would tell the King on the first occasion that the Dominicans had scandalized the world by spreading the idea that they all were condemned to Hell because they used Indians in the mines. This was a teaching that went against the orders of His Highness and aimed at nothing else but to deprive him of both power and a source of income.

The King demanded to meet with the Castilian head of the Dominican Order and complained to him about his choice of friars, who had done him a great disservice by preaching against the government and causing disturbances all over the world. The King ordered him to correct this by threatening to take action. You see how easy it is to deceive a King.... ❐

Bartolomé de las Casas

[Fray Antonio de Montesinos and the Dominicans of Hispaniola were pressured by their own hierarchy in Spain, as well as by the King, to stop preaching such a scandalous doctrine. But, according to Lewis Hanke in The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America, "the Dominicans were in no way awed by the summary orders from their Superior and their King, and fought back." Montesinos travelled to Spain to argue on behalf of the Indians. His efforts in part led to adoption of the 1512 Laws of Burgos, which both offered some protection for Indians but also made permanent the Spaniards' control over them.]

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Land of the Spotted Eagle

The following selection is from Land of the Spotted Eagle, *the autobiography of Chief Luther Standing Bear, of the Oglala band of Sioux.*

The Indian was a natural conservationist. He destroyed nothing, great or small. Destruction was not a part of Indian thought and action; if it had been, and had the man been the ruthless savage he has been accredited with being, he would have long ago preceded the European in the labor of destroying the natural life of this continent. The Indian was frugal in the midst of plenty. When the buffalo roamed the plains in multitudes he slaughtered only what he could eat and these he used to the hair and bones. Early one spring the Lakotas were camped on the Missouri river when the ice was beginning to break up. One day a buffalo floated by and it was hauled ashore. The animal proved to have been freshly killed and in good condition, a welcome occurrence at the time since the meat supply was getting low. Soon another came floating downstream, and it was no more than ashore when others came into view. Everybody was busy saving meat and hides, but in a short while the buffalo were so thick on the water that they were allowed to float away. Just why so many buffalo had been drowned was never known, but I relate the instance as a boyhood memory.

I know of no species of plant, bird, or animal that were exterminated until the coming of the white man. For some years after the buffalo disappeared there still remained huge herds of antelope, but the hunter's work was no sooner done in the destruction of the buffalo than his attention was attracted toward the deer. They are plentiful now only where protected. The white man considered natural animal life just as he did the natural man life upon this continent, as "pests." Plants which the Indian found beneficial were also "pests." There is no word in the Lakota vocabulary with the English meaning of this word.

There was a great difference in the attitude taken by the Indian and the Caucasian toward nature, and this difference made of one a conservationist and of the other a non-conservationist of life. The Indian, as well as all other creatures that were given birth and grew, were sustained by the common mother — earth. He was therefore kin to all living things and he gave to all creatures equal rights with himself. Everything of earth was loved and reverenced. The philosophy of the Caucasian was, "Things of the earth, earth" — to be belittled and despised. Bestowing upon himself the position and title of a superior creature, others in the scheme were, in the natural order of things, of inferior position and title; and this attitude dominated his actions toward all things. The worth and right to live were his, thus he heartlessly destroyed. Forests were mowed down, the buffalo exterminated, the beaver driven to extinction and his wonderfully constructed dams dynamited, allowing flood waters to wreak further havoc, and the very birds of the air silenced. Great grass plains that sweetened the air have been upturned; springs, streams, and lakes that lived no longer ago than my boyhood have dried, and a whole people harassed to degradation and death. The white man has come to be the symbol of extinction for all things natural to this continent. Between him and the animal there is no rapport and they have learned to flee from his approach, for they cannot live on the same ground....❐

Our resource guide is only a beginning. We encourage our readers to draw on the other resource listings in the curricula listed below and on publishers' catalogs of books that you like. Prices listed are for paperback editions. Books that are currently out of print are indicated by "O/P." They might be available at a library. Ask your local bookseller to request that the publisher reissue the book. Books listed for a particular age group might be very appropriate for other ages so please read the entire list. Finally, we ask that readers send comments on this list and additions to Rethinking Schools *so that we might include them in future editions.*

RESOURCES

CURRICULAR GUIDES

The following curricula should be in every school's professional library.

American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and a Bibliography, by Hirschfelder, Arlene B. The Scarecrow Press, Inc, Metuchen, N.J. 1982. ISBN 0-8108-1494-3. $22.50.

Anti-Bias Curriculum, Tools for Empowering Young Children, by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Conn. Ave., N.W. Wash., DC 20009. 1989. ISBN 0-935989-20-X. $7. Perhaps the best book for the early child/primary level on how to teach children about all forms of bias and what to do about it.

Caribbean Connections, edited by Catherine Sunshine. 1991. NECA/EPICA (See Organizations). Stories, interviews, songs, drama and oral histories, accompanied by lesson plans for secondary language arts and social studies. Puerto Rico ($15), Jamaica ($15), Regional History ($19).

Dangerous Memories: Invasion and Resistance Since 1492. Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America (See Organizations). 1991. 272 pages. $19.50. Using primary and secondary sources, presents the history of Latin, Central and North America and the Caribbean. "...not only a timely recall of facts largely left unsaid, it is an embrace of the righteousness of struggle, a celebration of a people's will to resist."

1492-1992: Exploring the Past to Discover the Present. Prepared by the Quincentennial Education Project of the Central America Resource Center. Packets for K-6 ($5), 7-12($5) and National History Day ($12). CARC, 317 17th Ave, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. 612-627-9445.

Inside the Volcano: A Curriculum on Nicaragua, edited by Bill Bigelow and Jeff Edmundson. NECA (See Organizations). 1990. ISBN 1-878-554-01-8. Poetry, short stories, and interviews. $15.

Keepers of the Earth, Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children, by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Golden, Colorado, Fulcrum Inc. 1988. ISBN 1-55591-027-0. $19.95. The book features a collection of North American Indian stories and related hands-on activities designed to inspire children. The emphasis is on an interdisciplinary approach to teaching about the earth and Native American cultures. *Keepers of the Earth Teacher Guide*, ISBN 1-55591-040-8. $9.95.

Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Promote Race, Sex, Class, and Age Equity, by Nancy Schniedewind and Ellen Davidson. Prentice Hall. 1983. ISBN 0-13-637264-3. $21.50. An activity packed guide for grades 3-8 that does an excellent job addressing controversial topics. Also available by Schniedewind and Davidson is *Cooperative Learning Cooperative Lives: A Sourcebook for Learning Activities for Building a Peaceful World.* W.C. Brown Company. 1987. ISBN 0-6977-02274-9. $26. Order both from Circle Books, 30 Walnut St., Somerville, MA 02143.

Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History, edited by Gerald Horne. Council on Interracial Books for Children (address below). 1988. ISBN 1-55591-040-8. $16.95. A critical analysis of 12 textbooks with accompanying historical analysis. Includes lesson plans. Middle/high school/teacher training.

Through Indian Eyes, The Native Experience in Books for Children, edited by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale. Oyate, 2702 Mathews Street, Berkeley, CA 94702. 510-848-6700. 1991. $24.95. An excellent resource for elementary classroom teachers and librarians. Articles, stories, poetry, and in-depth reviews of books dealing with Native Americans. Includes one of the best bibliographies of books on Native Americans for children.

Two Visions of the Conquest. A one week unit comparing the Spanish and Aztec views of the Spanish in Mexico. Includes slides of Aztec and Spanish paintings of events during the conquest and eye-witness accounts from both perspectives. Recommended for grades 9-12 (w/adaptations for 7-8). $21. SPICE/Latin America Project, Littlefield Center, # 14, 300 Lasuen St., Stanford Univ., Stanford, CA 94305-5013. 415-723-1114.

Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes, A Teaching Unit for Elementary Teachers and Children's Librarians, published by The Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, a Division of the Council on Interracial Books for Children. 1981. Native Children talk about their various cultures, dreams, and the harm done by the stereotypes they find around them, especially in children's picture books. $39.95. CIBC, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. 212-757-5339. Ask for complete catalog. Teaching guide : $4.95. Also: *Unlearning Chicano and Puerto Rican Stereotypes* (1982), and *Unlearning Asian American Stereotypes* (1982). All are appropriate (with some modification) for 1-12 grades. Particularly good for teacher training.

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ELEMENTARY BOOKS

Ahenakew, Freda, ed. *How the Birch Tree Got its Stripes*. Fifth House. 1988. ISBN 0-920079-38-5. Order from Inland, PO Box 12061, East Haven, CT 06512. Beautifully illustrated, easy to read story written by Cree students.

Awiakta, Marilou. *Rising Fawn and the Fire Mystery*. St. Luke's Press. 1984. ISBN 0-918518-29-6. $6.95. Grade 4 & up. Choctaw. Very moving story about the Trail of Tears.

Batherman, Muriel. *Before Columbus*. Houghton Mifflin Co. 1990. ISBN 0-395-54954-X. $4.95. Describes dwellings, tools, clothing, and customs of daily life of the earliest inhabitants, based on archaeological findings. Special focus on Pueblos.

Benton-Banai, Edward. *The Mishomis Book, the Voice of the Ojibway*. Indian Country Press, Inc., 292 Walnut, Irvine Park Offices, Saint Paul, MN 55102. $10. A book of traditional teachings on the Ojibway creation and instructions for living by a traditional Anishinabe.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Iroquois Stories: Heroes and Heroines, Monsters and Magic*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press. 1985. ISBN 0-89594-167-8. 3rd grade and up. Among the best collection of native stories for children.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Native American Stories*. Fulcrum Publishing. 1991. ISBN 1-55591-094-7. $9.95. A collection of stories of Native American tales and myths focusing on the relationship between man and nature. (From *Keepers of the Earth* by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac).

Chow, Octavio. *The Invisible Hunter*. Children's Book Press. 1987. ISBN 0-89239-054-9. $13.95. Miskito village story of indigenous life and foreign intervention.

Clymer, Theodore, ed. *Four Corners of the Sky*. Little, Brown & Co. 1975. Startling, bright colored pages illustrate this collection of traditional poems, chants & orations. O/P.

Culleton, Beatrice. *Spirit of the White Bison*. Book Publishing Co. 1989. ISBN 0-913990-64-7. Grades 4 and up. Plains Nations story of the deliberate destruction of the bison.

Deur, Lynne. *Indian Chiefs*. Minneapolis, Lerner Publications Co. 1972. These 14 biographical sketches of Indian men focus on the struggle of as many tribes to retain their land and way of life. O/P.

Ekoomiak, Normee. *Arctic Memories*. New York, Henry Holt. 1988. ISBN 0-8050-1254-0. $15.95. Bilingual English/Inuit. Through paintings and words, honors a traditional life that still continues. Beautiful.

Goble, Paul. *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*. Macmillan Children's Book Group. 1986. ISBN 0-689-71082-8. $3.95. Beautifully illustrated story of a Plains Indian girl devoted to the care of her tribe's horses. Caldecott Medal winner.

Le Sueur, Meridel. *Sparrow Hark*. Holy Cow! Press. Story of two boys who experience the joy of discovery and the tragedy of swift change at the time of the Black Hawk War. 5th grade and up.

Liestman, Vicki. *Columbus Day*. Minneapolis, Carolrhoda Books. 1991. ISBN 0-87614-444-X. $9.95. One of the only books about Columbus Day that begins to tell the truth about the treatment of Native Peoples. Shares some of the Euro-centric biases of other Columbus biographies, but it's the best one we've seen. 2nd grade reading level.

Montejo, Victor. *The Bird Who Cleans the World and other Mayan Fables*. 1991, Curbstone Press, 321 Jackson St., Willimantic, CT 06226. ISBN 0-915306-93-X. $22.95. A collection of Jakaltek Mayan folktales told to the author by his mother and the elders of his Guatemalan village. Illustrated with Mayan images. Distributed by INBOOK, 1-800-253-3605.

Ortiz, Simon. *The People Shall Continue*. Illustrated by Sharol Graves. Children's Book Press, 6400 Hollis St #4, Emeryville, CA 94608. (Write for catalog as they publish many good books.) 1987. ISBN 0-89239-041-7. $13.95. An epic story of Native American peoples, extending in time from the creation to present, a "teaching story" of destruction, fighting back, and survival. Highly recommended.

Lacapa, Michael. *The Flute Player: An Appache Legend*. Northland Publishing. 1990. ISBN 0-87358-500-3. $14.95. Ancient Apache story retold and illustrated.

Otto-Diniz, Sara. *Mysteries of the Maya*. Available from Ariadne's Thread, 2905 Las Cruces, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. 505-884-9350. An activity booklet originally designed to accompany the museum exhibit, Maya: Treasures of an Ancient Civilization. $4.95 + $2 postage.

Rohmer, Harriet, ed. *The Legend of Food Mountain/La Montaña del alimento*. Children's Book Press. 1982. ISBN 0-89239-022-0. $13.95. Adapted from the Chimalpopocatl Codice, one of several picture-writing manuscripts recorded by Native priests after the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

Turner, Wilson. *Maya Design Coloring Book*. Dover Publications, Inc. 1980. ISBN 0-486-2047-9. $3.50. Items represented in this book include designs painted on vases, architectural sculpture, murals, and illustrated books.

SECONDARY BOOKS

Akwesasne Notes. *Voices From Wounded Knee, 1973, In The Words of the Participants*. Akwesasne Notes, c/o Mohawk Nation, via Rooseveltown, NY 13683. 1974. ISBN 0-914838-02-4. History of American Indian Movement, chronology, photos.

Alegría, Claribel, et al. *Ariel's Song: Latino and Latin American Voices in the Quincentenary*. Curbstone Press, 321 Jackson St., Willimantic, CT 06226. $1/newsprint. 32 page sampling of readings by Latin American authors for secondary students.

Brand, Johanna. *Life and Death of Anna Mae Aquash*. Toronto, Lorimer. 1978. The story of the FBI coverup of the murder of an AIM activist.

Broker, Ignacia. *Night Flying Woman*. Minnesota Historical Society Press. 1983. ISBN 0-87351-167-0. $7.50. An Ojibway elder recounts the life of his great-great grandmother.

Brown, Dee. *Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Dell. 1975. ISBN 0-440-95768-0. $1.50. Adapted for young readers by Amy Ehrlich from Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*.

Carter, Forrest. *The Education of Little Tree*. University of New Mexico Press. 1986. ISBN 0-8263-0879-1 (paper). $10.95. A moving account of a Cherokee as he grows up with his grandparents.

Council on Interracial Books for Children. *Chronicles of American Indian Protest*. 2nd Revised Edition. New York, CIBC. 1979. ISBN 0-930040-30-9. $7.95.

Johansen, Bruce E., *Forgotten Founders: How the American Indian Helped Shape Democracy*, Harvard Common Press. 1982. ISBN 0-916782-90-5. $12.95.

Katz, William. *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage*. Macmillan, 100 Front St. Box 500, Riverside, NJ 08075. 1986. ISBN 0-689-31196-6. $15.95. The first paths to freedom by runaway slaves led to Native American villages. Describes historic links between African and Native Peoples in the Americas.

Koning, Hans. *Columbus: His Enterprise: Exploding the Myth* (with afterword by Bill Bigelow). Monthly Review Press. 1991. ISBN 0-85345-825-1. $8.95. High school and adult. Essential for teachers trying to overcome the myths we've been fed about Columbus. Koning succinctly depicts Columbus for who he was and frankly describes the horrendous consequences of his actions on the Native people and the environment.

Lesley, Craig, ed. *Talking Leaves: Contemporary Native American Short Stories, An Anthology*. Dell. 1991. ISBN 0-440-50344-2. Thirty eight short stories by Native Americans.

Martínez, Elizabeth, ed. *500 Años del Pueblo Chicano/500 Years of Chicano History*. SouthWest Organizing Project, 211 10th St. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. 1992. $16.95. Bilingual pictoral history of the Chicano people.

Meltzer, Milton. *Columbus and the World Around Him*. Franklin Watts, Inc., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. 1-800-672-6672. 1990. ISBN 0-531-15148-4. $13.95. Describes the Columbus voyages, the impact of the Spaniards, and the ultimate cultural influence of the Native Americans on their white conquerors. 7th grade/up.

Meltzer, Milton. *Hunted Like a Wolf: The Story of the Seminole War*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 1972. ISBN 0-374-33521-4. Summarizes one of the most famous wars of resistance by Native Americans, noting the Native and African-American unity. O/P.

Menchú, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Routledge, Chapman and Hall. 1985. ISBN 0-86091-788-6. $13.95. Powerful testimony of a Quiché of Guatemala. Condemns the social and economic system of Guatemala that oppresses Native people.

Montejo, Victor. *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village*. Curbstone. $8.95. Eyewitness account by a Guatemalan primary school teacher, detailing one instance of violent conflict between the indigenous Mayan people and the army.

Small, Deborah. *1492: What is it Like to Be Discovered?* Monthly Review Press. 1991. ISBN 0-85345-836-7. $15. Weaves together a history of Columbus's invasion with poetry, quotations, and illustrations.

Stevens and Shea. *Chief Joseph* and *The Cherokee Removal*. Stevens and Shea Publishers, PO Box 794, Stockton, CA 95201. 1982. Readers theater with roles to involve students through drama.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. Perennial Library, Harper and Row Publishers. 1981. ISBN 0-06-090792-4. $9.95. An outstanding text for any attempt to rethink our history. An early chapter deals with Columbus. Zinn presents a perspective and facts that never made the history textbooks. An indispensible teacher resource, written on a high school level.

ORIGINAL SOURCES

Adorno, Rolena. *Guaman Pomo: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*. University of Texas Press, 1986. ISBN 0-292-72741-0 $10.95. A Peruvian chief's account of life under the Incas and under Spanish rule.

Casas, Bartolomé de las. *History of the Indies*. translated and edited by Andree M. Collard. Harper & Row Torchbook. 1971. ISBN 06-131540-0. O/P. If you can find it, read it. Las Casas is the most qualified of all the 16th century chroniclers.

Jane, Cecil, ed. *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*. New York: Outlet Book Company, Crown Publishing Co., 225 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003. 800-526-4264. 1987. ISBN 0-517-69699-1. $6.99.

León-Portillo, M. *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108. 800- 631-8571. 1962. ISBN 0-8070-5499-2. $11.95. The Aztec left a rich written record which Leon-Portilla uses to provide a Native perspective on the "discovery."

Lunenfeld, Marvin. *1492: Discovery, Invasion, Encounter*. DC Heath. 1991. ISBN 0-669-21115. Original source material.

Vanderwerth, W.C., compiler. *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains*. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1971. ISBN 0-8061-1575-0. $12.95. Inspiration from Iotanka Tatanka (Sitting Bull), Geronimo, Chief Joseph, others.

ADULTS/TEACHERS BOOKS

Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions.* Beacon Press. 1987. ISBN 0-8070-4601-9. $12.95. Essays, poetry, keen insights.

Barreiro, José, ed. *View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on the Quincentenary.* Akwe:kon Press. 1992. $12. Explores effects of Columbus's arrival on indigenous people. By same author, *Indian Roots of American Democracy.* (Order from *Northeast Indian Quarterly*, 400 Caldwell Hall, Cornell Univ, Ithaca, NY 14853.)

Brotherston, Gordon. *Image of the New World: The American Continent Portrayed in Native Texts.* London, Thames and Hudson. 1979. $10.95. Invasion, defense, rituals, calendars and more, with 118 documentary texts, 6 tables, 4 maps. O/P.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Songs From This Earth on Turtle's Back: An Anthology of Poetry by American Indian Writers.* Greenfield Review Literary Center. 1983. ISBN 0-912678-58-5. $9.95.

Carew, Jan. *Fulcrums of Change.* Africa World Press (See Organizations.) 1988. ISBN 0-86543-033-0. Essays on Columbus and the origins of racism in the Americas.

Churchill, Ward and Jim Vander Wall. *Agents of Repression.* South End Press. 1990. ISBN 0-89608-293-8. $15. The FBI's secret war against the Black Panthers and AIM.

Deloria, Vine. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto.* Univ. of Oklahoma Press. 1988. ISBN 0-8061-2129-7. $11.95.

Deloria, Vine and Clifford Lytle. *American Indians, American Justice.* University of Texas Press. 1983. ISBN 0-292-73834-X. $10.95. Reprint of classic indictment of mistreatment of Indian peoples.

Drinnan, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire-Building.* Schocken. 1990. ISBN 0-8052-0978-6. $16.95. Makes connections between suppression of native nations and the suppression of liberation movements throughout the world.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Memory of Fire: Century of the Wind* (Three volumes: *Genesis.* 1987. ISBN 0-394-74730-5. $12.95; *Faces and Masks.* 1988. ISBN 0-394-75167-1. $11.95; and *Century of the Wind.* 1988. ISBN 0-394-55361-6. $14. Pantheon Books, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022. 1-800-638-6460. Also available in Spanish as *Memoria de fuego,* Madrid: Editorial Siglo XXI, 1986. Documentary history from the first human inhabitants to 1984. Highly recommended.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent.* Monthly Review Press. 1973. ISBN 0-85345-308-X. $10. Powerful. Highly recommended.

Gennino, Angela, ed. *Amazonia: Voices from the Rainforest. A Resource Action Guide.* Rainforest Action Network, 301 Broadway Rm A, San Francisco, CA 94133. 415-398-4404. 1990. $8.50. Excellent resource guide on how to support efforts by grassroots Amazon basin organizations to defend the rainforest.

Jaimes, M. Annette, ed. *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance.* South End Press, 1-800-533-8478. 1991. ISBN 0-89608-424-8. $16. Essays by Native American authors and activists on contemporary Native issues including the quincentenary.

Johansen, Bruce and Roberto Maestas. *Wasi'chu: The Continuing Indian Wars.* Monthly Review Press. 1980. ISBN 0-85345-507-4. $10. Chronicles the history of Native struggles in the United States.

Klein, Barry T., ed. *Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indian,* 6th ed. Todd Publications, 18 N Greenbush Rd., West Nyack, NY 10994. 1992. ISBN 0-915344-16-5. Cloth $95. Paper $49.50. Good resource; addresses of North American reservations, associations, libraries, and schools. Extensive bibliography and biographies.

Niatum, Duane, editor. *Harper's Anthology of Twentieth Century Native American Poetry.* Harper and Row. 1988. ISBN 0-06-250666-8. $16.95. Thirty-six poets.

Ortiz, Simon. *Fightin': New and Collected Stories.* Thunder's Mouth Press, 93-99 Greene St., #2A, New York, NY 10012. 1983. ISBN 0-938410-8. $6.95. A collection of contemporary short stories.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* Vintage. 1978. 368 pages. $12. Brilliant critical analysis of how the West views the "Orient."

Sale, Kirkpatrick. *The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy.* NAL/Dutton. 1991. ISBN 0-452-26669-6. $12.95. Links Columbus's legacy to environmental degradation and loss of "place." Detailed quotes from original sources. Highly recommended.

Thornton, Russell. *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492,* University of Oklahoma Press. 1990. ISBN 0-8061-2220-X. $12.95.

Truettner, William H., ed. *The West As America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier.* Smithsonian Institution Press. 1991. ISBN 1-56098-023-0. $60. Paperback was available temporarily in summer 1991. Describes the Smithsonian show that sparked so much controversy in the nation's capital.

Turner, Frederick. *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit Against the Wilderness.* Rutgers Univ. Press. 1983. ISBN 0-8135-1021-X. $14. Effect of the conquest on the land and peoples of the Americas.

Van Sertima, Ivan. *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America.* McKay, David Company. 1989. ISBN 0-679-72530-X. $14.95. Africans discovered trade routes to the Americas used by Columbus and arrived in the Americas before him, according to Van Sertima.

Weatherford, Jack. *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World.* Fawcet Book Group. 1989. ISBN 0-449-90496-2. $8.95. Native Americans "gave" Europeans wealth, food, the idea of a federal government system, and many other innovations that are thought of as European. Excellent. Also *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America.* Crown Publishers. 1992. ISBN 0-517-57485-3.

Wolf, Eric. *Europe and the People Without History.* University of California Press. 1982. ISBN 0-520-04898-9. $15.95. Surveys the whole world in 1492.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

Canyon Record and Indian Arts, 4143 N. 16th St., Phoenix, AZ 85016. 602-266-4823. The largest distributor of American Indian audio tapes, LPs, CDs (over 600 titles). Includes various forms of music and legends. Also for sale is the American Indian Music for the Classroom Teaching Package by Dr. Louis W. Ballard (4 cassette kit) for $75.

The Columbus Controversy: Challenging How History is Written. Directed by Nick Kaufman. 1991 American School Publishers, 1-800-843-8855. This 24-minute VHS video examines the Columbus controversy using footage from the classroom of Bill Bigelow, along with historians John Mohawk and William McNeil. $89.

"Columbus Didn't Discover Us." 30 minute VHS video featuring interviews with indigenous activists from North, South, and Central America. Filmed at the First Continental Congress of Indigenous Peoples in Quito, Ecuador in 1990. Eng. & Spanish versions. Low-income groups: purchase: $39.95, rental: $20. Institutions purchase: $89.95, rental $45. (Add $5 for shipping.) Turning Tide Productions, PO Box 864, Wendell, MA 01379. 508-544-8313.

El Norte. By Gregory Nava. 141 min. video. 1983. Story of two young Guatemalan Mayans who are forced to flee their homeland and travel to "The North." Available from video outlets & CINECOM, 212-239-8360.

First Contact. Describes first contact between white traders and Okanagan people from point of view of Okanagan. The En'Owkin Centre, Box 218, Penticton, BC Canada V2A6K3. 604-493-7181.

Geronimo Jones. A young boy (Apache/Papago), living on a reservation experiences the conflicts between his Indian heritage and the pressures of the dominant culture. 1970. 21 minutes. All ages. VHS purchase $250, rental $75. Order from Coronet/MTI Film and Video, 1-800-621-2131.

More than Bows and Arrows, a classic film to increase understanding of Native Americans for elementary through adult audiences. $15 rental from HONOR (see organizations for address). Long and short VHS video available.

Native Americans on Film and Video, Vol II ('88). Elizabeth Weatherford & Emilia Seubert, editors. Detailed descriptions of approximately 400 films and videos about Indians and Inuit of the Americas. $7.50. Available from National Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., New York, NY 10032. 212-283-2420.

Treaties, Truth and Trust. This video presents 10 of the most commonly asked questions on treaty rights. VHS 14 minutes. $15 purchase/$10 rental, available from HONOR.

Unlearning "Indian" Stereotypes, (Film Strip) see curriculum section, p. 85.

When the Mountains Tremble. By Yates and Sigel. Story of 23-year-old Guatemalan Quiché woman, Rigoberta Menchú. 83 minutes. Video $300. New Yorker Films, 16 West 61st St., New York, NY 10023. 212-247-6110.

PUBLICATIONS

Important sources of information on Native American and alternative quincentennial activities (addresses in the organizational listing on pages 90 and 91.)

Akwesasne Notes
Basta! (Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America.)
CALC Report
The Connection (Central American Resource Center)
huracán: 500 Years of Resistance (Alliance for Cultural Democracy)
Indigenous Thought (Committee for American Indian History)
Lakota Times
Native Nations
News from Indian Country
Northeast Indian Quarterly
Rethinking Schools
Re...view 1992
SAIIC Newsletter

MAPS, POSTERS, ETC.

Peters Projection World Map presents all countries according to their true size. Traditional Mercator Projection maps distorts sizes, making Europe appear much larger than it actually is. (See p. 76). *A New View of the World* by Ward Kaiser is a handbook on the Peters world map. Map/$18 and handbook/$3.95 available from Northern Sun Merchandising, 2916 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55406.

Distribution of Indian Tribes of North America by A. Kroeber. 21" x 28" map of the time of first contact with white people. Available from Southwest Museum, Highland Park, Los Angeles, CA 90042.

Indians of North America, An archaeological and ethnological map. 32" x 37" with notes, 1979. National Geographic Society, Educational Services, Department 82, Washington DC 20036. 301-948-5926.

Waldman, Carl. *Atlas of the North American Indian* (maps & illus by Molly Braun.) 1989. ISBN 0-8160-2136-8. Facts on File. $16.95.

Turn about Map of the Americas presents South America on the top and North America on the bottom. Available in English, Spanish, or Portuguese. In full color $6.95 from Laguna Sales, Inc. 7040 Via Valverde, San Jose, CA 95135.

Posters. A variety of progressive posters are available from Syracuse Cultural Workers, Box 6367, Syracuse, NY 13217, 315-474-1132; Northern Sun Merchandising, 2916 E. Lake St., Minn., MN 55406; and TABS, 438 Fourth St., Brooklyn, NY 11215. A source for Native American posters is the Perfection Form Company, Logan, Iowa. A collection of 84 maps and charts on Native American history is available from Historic Indian Pub., 1404 Sunset Drive, P.O. 16074, Salt Lake City, UT 84116. 801-328-0458.

Guatemala: 500 Years of Resistance 1992 Calendar. From Ayuda, PO Box 1752, Boston MA 02105. $8.

Graphics in resource guide are taken from *North American Indian Designs*, by Eva Wilson. Dover, 1984.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ORGANIZATIONS

Africa World Press. 15 Industry Ct., Trenton, NJ 08638. 609-771-1666. Publishes and distributes excellent books on Africa and the Americas.

Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, PO Box 196, Rooseveltown, NY 13683-0196. 518-358-9531. Canada: 613-575-2063. Six issues/year. Cost: U.S.$15, Canada and Mexico $18, Foreign $20. An excellent quarterly on Native American affairs.

Alliance for Cultural Democracy, P.O. Box 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407. Ask for a copy of their journals, *Cultural Democracy* and *huracan*. ($15/YR). How To 1992 Comic book project.

Amazon Network, 3941 Fairfax Square, Fairfax, VA 22031. Bringing together people of and for the Amazon Rainforest. Speakers, casettes, video and slide presentations.

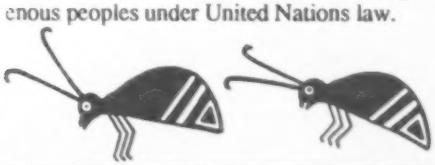
American Friends Service Committee: 500 Years is Enough, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. 215-241-7169.

American Indian Law Alliance, 488 Seventh Avenue, Suite 5K, New York, NY 10018. 212-268-1347. Resource center and advocacy organization working on behalf of native peoples and issues.

American Indian Library Association, c/o Lisa Mitten, Secretary, 207 Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. 412-648-7723. Ask for bibliographies and programs.

American Indian Program, Attention: Carol Cornelius, 300 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. 607-255-6587. Program guides and curriculum packages for teachers on Native Americans.

Amnesty International, Rights of Indigenous Peoples Project, 53 West Jackson Street, #1162, Chicago, IL 60604. 312-427-2060. Curriculum on the rights on indigenous peoples under United Nations law.



Ancient Forest Chautauqua, 5031 University Way, N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. 206-523-2747. Events and newsletter focusing on environment and indigenous perspectives.

Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services, 2095 Rose Street, Suite 4, Berkeley, CA 94709. 510-704-0517. Resources for 1st through 12th grade.

Arctic to Amazonia Alliance, PO Box 73, Strafford, VT 05072. 802-765-4337. Media outreach, teacher training, speakers.

Campaña Continental, 500 Años de Resistencia Indigena y Popular, Secretaria Operativa, Apartado Postal 7-B, Sucursal El Trebol, 01903 Guatemala Ciudad, Guatemala, C.A. Leading organizer of North, Central and South American indigenous struggles and communications.

Canadian Alliance in Solidarity With Native Peoples, P.O. Box 574 Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T1 Canada. Send $19.95 for a copy of Resource Reading List 1990 (ISBN 0921425031), which helps educators in Canada and the U.S. by describing films, periodicals, distributors, language books, and other resource materials.

Central American Resource Center-Quincentennial Education Project, 317 17th Ave. SE Minneapolis, MN 55414. 612-627-9445. Publishers of the *Connection* and curricula, packets of quincentennial materials.

Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, 59 East Van Buren, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60605. 312-663-4398. Publishes monthly journal, *Basta!*

Clergy and Laity Concerned, 340 Mead Rd., Decatur, GA 30030. 404-377-1983. Publishers of *CALC Report*, Columbus educational packet ($8).

Committee for American Indian History, 6802 SW 13th St, Gainesville, FL 32608; 904-378-3246. Coordinates activities and publishes *Indigenous Thought*, a newsletter, with special focus on Quincentennial issues from a Native American perspective. In-service training for teachers.

COPRAD (Consortium on Peace Research, Education, Development), c/o Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030-2038. 703-323-2038. Activist, academic and student group organizing conference and activities around peace issues and Quincentennial.

Cultural Survival, 53-A Church St., Cambridge, MA 02138. 617-495-2562. Addresses issues of indigenous peoples and educates world-wide audience through quarterly news magazine. Events, info packet on quincentennial.

Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Conflict, peace and justice teaching materials.

Food First, 145 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103. 1-800-888-3314. Curriculum resources on causes of hunger and food problems.

Global Village, 2210 Wilshire Boulevard, Box 262, Santa Monica, CA 90403. 1-800-955-GLOBAL. Great collection of anti-bias multicultural materials. Write for catalog.

Grand Council of the Cree (of Quebec), 24 Bayswater Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 2E4. Organizing against the James Bay Hydro electric project in Quebec. See story p. 62.

HONOR, Inc, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211. 414-963-1324. Treaty rights focus; newsletter, booklet of statements and resolutions. Write for resource catalog.

Indigenous Women's Network, P.O. Box 174, Lake Elmo, MN 55402. A continental and pacific network of women who are actively involved in their community. Publishes *Indigenous Woman*. $4 per issue.

International Indian Treaty Council, 710 Clayton Street, #1, San Francisco, CA 94117. 415-566-0251. Political arm of the American Indian Movement, with non-governmental organization status at the UN.

Indian Law Resource Center, 601 E Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003. 202-547-2800. Defense of Indian rights and the environment.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater, 1550 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55407. 612-721-2535. A "Discover America" Touring Show.

Native American Authors Distribution Project, Greenfield Review Press, 2 Middle Grove Rd., PO Box 308, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Offers more than 250 different titles from over 70 different publishers. Audio cassettes of American Indian storytelling.

NAES College Bookstore, 2838 West Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659. 312-761-5000. Books by and about Indians. Catalog.

National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, Racial Justice Working Group, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. 212-870-2298. Write for resolution, "A Faithful Response to the 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of Christopher Columbus." Resource for those in communities of faith. Study/action packet for $9.

Native American Ministry, United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 75050, Milwaukee, WI 53215. 414-384-1500. Distributors of a fine annotated bibliography on Native Peoples of North America (created by the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the UMC), with sections on children, women, law, spirituality.

Native Nations magazine, 175 5th Ave., Suite 2245, New York, NY 10010. 212-741-2365. $20/year. Excellent.

National Coalition of Education Activists PO Box 405, Rosendale, NY 12472. 914-658-8115. Activist group of parents and teachers working on anti-racist education projects including the quincentennial, tracking, standardized testing and class size. Quarterly newsletter and annual conference. Write for brochure.

Native American Center for the Living Arts, 25 Rainbow Mall, Niagara Falls, NY 14303. Cross-cultural education through museum and art exhibitions and publishing. "Turtle Quarterly" publication will focus on 1992 issues.

Network of Educators on Central America, 1118 22nd Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. 202-429-0137. Co-producer of *Rethinking Columbus* and sponsor of workshops for teachers on "Rethinking Columbus," featuring Bill Bigelow. Quarterly newsletter *Central America in the Classroom.*

News From Indian Country. A bi-weekly newspaper. $18/yr from Indian Country Communications, Inc. Rt. 2, Box 2900-A, Hayward, WI 54843. 715-634-5226.

1992 Alliance, c/o Morning Star Foundation, 403 10th St., SE, Washington, DC 20003.

North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), 475 Riverside Dr., Room 454, New York, NY 10115. 212-870-3146. Quarterly journal *Report on the Americas.* $22/year. Publishing special reports for the Quincentenary on cultures, ecology, Native Peoples and African Peoples of the Americas. (All 4 for $18.) Excellent.

Northeast Indian Quarterly, 400 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. Scholarly articles on Native issues and perspectives. Subscription $15. See Adult/Teacher books for publication *View from the Shore.*

Our Developing World, 13004 Paseo Presada, Saratoga, CA 95070. 408-379-4431. Developing multicultural curriculum to re-examine Thanksgiving, Columbus Day, etc. Resources, workshops.

OYATE, 2702 Mathews St., Berkeley, CA 94702. Native organization focusing on the real histories of indigenous people of the Americas. Evaluation of texts, distribution of materials. Send SAE for lists of materials.

Panos Institute, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20036. 202-483-0044. Research and information on the environment and people of color.

Peace and Dignity Journeys, 1301 W. 16th St, Chicago, IL 60608. 312-733-6363, FAX 312-733-6006. Dual relays north from Argentina and south from Alaska from April to October 1992.

Peacework, 2161 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140. 617-661-6130. Peace and social justice group with newsletter focusing on counter-quincentennial, $1.

Pueblo to People, PO Box 2545, Houston, TX 77252. 1-800-843-5257. Non-profit group which sells products from craft and agricultural coops in Latin America.

Rethinking Schools, 1001 E. Keefe Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53212. 414-964-9646. Publishers of quarterly newspaper which has regular Columbus Column. Also publishers of *Rethinking Columbus.*

Re-View 1492-1992, PO Box 801, New York, NY 10009. A bilingual (English/Spanish) newsletter on the quincentennial.

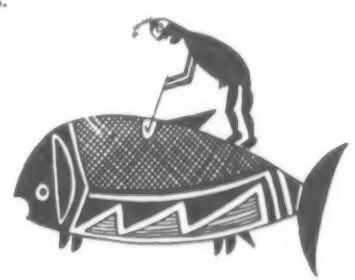
SAIIC (South and Meso-American Indian Information Center), PO Box 28703, Oakland, CA 94604. 415-834-4263, FAX 415-834-4264. Liason between North, Central and South American Indian people. Excellent newsletter with updates for general public on counter-Quincentennial activities around the world. *1992: International Directory and Resource Guide* ($12) 146 pages of organizations, speakers, curriculum and audio-visuals and more.

Traditional Circle of Native American Elders, c/o American Indian Institute, P.O. Box 1388, Bozeman, MT 59715. Supporters of Native American Alliance, a leading Native American voice on spiritual, environmental and other 1992-related issues.

Underground Railway Theater, 41 Foster Street, Arlington, MA 02174. 617-643-6916. "The Discovery of Columbus," a play with humor, music, puppetry, and audience participation, deals with the Columbus story from the Taíno perspective. Available for bookings nationwide.

WBAI-99.5 FM, "Columbus in Context", 505 Eighth Ave., 19th floor, New York, NY. 10018. 212-279-0707. Special radio programs, including a regular series from now until 1992.

Witness for Non-violence, 1759A N. Marshall, Milwaukee, WI 53202. 414-271-3309. Posters, training manuals for non-violent witnessing at Chippewa boat landings.



TEACHING GUIDE

These suggestions supplement ideas presented in articles elsewhere in this booklet, especially in Elementary School Issues and Secondary School Issues.

Thanking the Birds, by Joseph Bruchac, p. 11

Ask children to describe other positive attributes of animals and nature. Why might native people try to learn from animals? What do you do when you see animals or insects outdoors? What do we have to learn from them? Chief Luther Standing Bear said that in Lakota they have no word for "pest." What do you think of as "pests?" Why do you think the Lakota language has no word for "pest?"

Take a field trip to a park. Ask children to notice all the living things they can. Note: On a recent field trip to a river a number of students found some live clams and began smashing them against rocks. Incidents like this can be used to encourage students to reflect on their own values and behaviors. Read Joseph Bruchac's *Thanking the Birds*. Ask children if they agree with how Swift Eagle dealt with the boys. If they had been the children in the story, how would they have responded to Swift Eagle?

Nicely, Nicely, p.14

Ask for more examples of how parts of nature care for each other. How do people care for each other? Write a poem drawn from these examples.

Indian Children Speak, by Juanita Bell, p. 14

Choose two students to read the poem. One should read the parts beginning with "People said..." and another the responses.

Why might these Indian children be having problems in school? Is it because they aren't as "bright" as other children?

Ask students to imagine they are the children being complained about. Choose one of the Indian responses and use it as the first line of a poem. And/or take the ideas in the poem and write a "dialogue poem." For example:

"Indian children are very silent."
If I am silent it is because...

Alphabet of Native Contributions, p. 31

Does it surprise you to know that the items on the list come from America before Columbus arrived? Which surprised you the most? Why?

Draw pictures of some Native American contributions to the world. Cut out pictures from magazines and make a collage.

Ask students to look around the room. What originated with Native Americans? Have them make a list as they go through a day cataloging the items they use from native cultures. What ways did Native Americans impact European culture? How would their lives be different without these things? Older children could be encouraged to write skits about native contributions and perform these for younger children.

Note: Charts of native contributions to the world often acknowledge foods like potatoes and chilis without emphasizing that these plants were not simply found in the Americas but were developed by native agriculturalists. In recognizing native contributions we should not become complacent about the human costs of the exchange: "They are OK because they gave us something, we are OK because we credit them for it."

The Untold Story, by Tina Thomas, p. 32

Encourage students to cut the story into strips and illustrate the descriptions. Students might be inspired by Tina's story to write their own stories about the Taíno-Spaniard encounter from the point of view of the "discovered." See other ideas for poem and story writing from a Taíno perspective in *Talking Back to Columbus*.

If your students write their own books, make arrangements for volunteers to take them to read. In other classrooms, encourage them to explain how and why theirs are different from traditional tales of discovery. Laminate the books and add them to the school library's collection.

Students might use Tina's story as a framework and add more detail. What do the Taínos say to each other as Columbus's invasion begins to destroy their culture? What do they think and feel?

Bring in commercially published books on Columbus. Have students compare the perspective of their books to the published books. See *Helping Children Critique Columbus Books*, p. 19.

The Delight Song of Tsoai-Talee, by N. Scott Momaday, p. 37

Ask students to write a poem about themselves modeled after Momaday's. Begin with "I am..." and complete the sentence. You might give them a specified number of descriptions, say 10, to list.

Loo-Wit, by Wendy Rose, p. 45

Note: Loo-Wit, or Mt. St. Helens, is in southwestern Washington state. It is an active volcano that erupted with tremendous force in 1980. The forests on Mt. St. Helens and throughout the Cascades are heavily logged by timber companies.

Write a poem from the perspective of a stream where salmon no longer run, that is no longer fished by Native Americans; of a river that has been dammed, of a meadow that has been turned into a park, had a road cut through it, or is now a city dump. Talk with students about the way Wendy Rose gives Loo-Wit consciousness and personality.

Bones of Contention, by Tony Hillerman, p. 46

Why does Perry have such contempt for Henry Highhawk and the Paho Society? What can you tell about Perry's attitude towards native people? What motivated Highhawk's demands? Were they unreasonable? What do you think of the Highhawk's action? How do you think Perry felt when she realized her grandparents' bones had been dug up? What should Perry do now?

Stage a debate between Highhawk and Perry.

Write a brief reaction from Perry's point of view. Or write Mrs. Bailey's reactions. Write Henry Highhawk's thoughts leading to his digging up Perry's grandparents' bones. Ask students to read these aloud.

You are an editorial writer for a local white-owned newspaper. Write an editorial attacking or defending Highhawk's actions. Complete the same assignment from the point of view of a writer for a paper that serves the Bitter Water people.

Investigate the policies of local museums about the remains of native people. Contact local native organizations to learn if they are satisfied that archaeologists respect their ancestors and sacred sites. Have students research national debates about the remains of native people. What are the policies of the Smithsonian Institution and other major museums?

Three Thousand Dollar Death Song, by Wendy Rose, p. 47

Why is she angry? Who does she blame?

Think of a time when something you really cared about was stolen. Quickwrite: Where did you get this object? Why was it meaningful to you? How did it feel to lose it? How did you feel about the person/persons who stole it? From these notes write about the incident as if you were telling a friend. Ask students to read their completed stories. Using the following questions as a guide, have them take notes as they listen: Whether or not we knew the person(s), how did we feel about them? Who did we blame? What did we do about the thefts?

Talk about: How does this help us understand the writer of the poem? of the Native American experience in general? In what ways were our experiences different?

Write a "talking back" poem modeled after Wendy Rose's. You might choose a quote to respond to, as she did. Notice the structure of her poem, how she remembers, invents details, poses questions.

Spokane Museum, by Ramona Wilson, p. 47

Ask students to write their own poem arguing that native people are not "relics." As a prompt, encourage them to begin with the lines:

"These are not relics
from lost people, lost lands.
I know where they are..."

Activities: See those listed with *Columbus Day.*

Study how October 12th is commemorated in other societies, among native peoples, in Spain, in Central America, etc.

Halfbreed Girl in the City School, by Jo Whitehorse Cochran, p. 48

[The poem is based on Jo Whitehorse Cochran's experiences as a Lakota-Norwegian girl in the almost entirely white schools of the Seattle, Washington area.]

How is the girl in the poem feeling? Why? How do you think she feels about other non-Indian children in school? How would school have to change to make her feel more a part of the school community? What more would you need to know about her life to really answer this? How is this girl likely to behave in class? How would her teachers describe her? How do these experiences affect her relationship with her parents? Affect her future? What if all children in a community were treated like this? Imagine you are this girl. What are your fantasies? Why is she attracted to being a "Changer" like Star Boy? What is a "changer?" Are there students in your school who wish they were a Changer like Star Boy? If so, what could the school do to treat them with respect and dignity? Why are her grandma's words important to her? What is meant that she swallows "in the silence"?

Remember someone who was in one of your classes who was treated in mean ways by either students or teachers. It might have been because they looked different, were a different race than the majority of children, did not conform to school rules or norms, etc. Use Jo Whitehorse Cochran's poem as a model and write about this person. Notice how Cochran uses questions — does your father beat you... do you hate your parents — to underscore the child's torment.

Write a letter to the girl's teacher, fellow students, or social worker instructing them how they should and should not treat this child.

Imagine you are this girl many years later. Write a letter of advice to a young girl or boy who you believe is in a similar situation.

Native Women in the Circle of Life, by Paula Gunn Allen, p. 50
Ceremony, by Leslie Marmon Silko, p. 52

Read the last paragraph in Paula Gunn Allen's *Native Women in the Circle of Life.* Why is the oral tradition so important in her culture? What special role do women play in maintaining this tradition?

Read "Ceremony." Who is the "they" who tries to destroy the stories? Why would "they" want those stories destroyed? Whose evil is mighty? Why can't it overpower the strength of the stories?

Think about stories that may be moving in *our* bellies. Ask students to bring in stories from their lives — ones that teach, that amuse, that remember. Seat students in a circle, maybe even on the floor, and share these as a group. Afterward talk about the roles stories play in our families and in our cultures. Compare these to Paula Gunn Allen's descriptions of the role stories played in her life.

The Sacred Circle, by Black Elk, p. 51

Ask students: If a circle best represents Black Elk's society, what symbol best represents life in this society? Ask students to draw their symbol and write an explanation. How would life in the United States have to change if we committed ourselves to the circle as a symbol: in terms of decision making, treatment of the earth, use of technology, political power, relations with other countries, etc. Ask students to write on this question and then discuss.

Take Black Elk's perspective and write about an important issue: nuclear waste, homelessness, drug abuse, etc.

Columbus Day, by Jimmie Durham, p. 59

Read the poem aloud. Ask students to visualize the descriptions.

How does the poem make you feel? Why? Is Durham angry, sad, hopeful? Why do you think he wrote the poem? What else has been left out of the school curriculum that should be there?

Use Durham's poem as a prompt for students to write. Begin, "In school I was taught..." and begin a second verse, "No one mentioned..."

Choose someone mentioned by Jimmie Durham — Chaske, Many Deeds — and write a poem from one of their perspectives. Or write a poem about people from another group that has traditionally been silenced in the curriculum.

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Let's Leave Columbus Behind, by Hans Koning, p. 74

Is Koning too hard on Columbus? If Columbus is as bad as Koning suggests why is he seen by some as a hero? Do we need heroes? If we do, what characteristics should our heroes have? Koning links incidents in today's world to actions of the Spaniards. What's the connection?

Write about how "Columbus Day" should be commemorated, or even whether it *should* be commemorated. [Watch the video, *The Columbus Controversy: Challenging How History is Written*. Use the comments of Jefferson High School students, John Mohawk and William McNeil to suggest ideas and/or refute different positions.]

Timeline: Spain, Columbus and Native Americans, p. 78

In preparing this timeline we found it easy to find information about Christopher Columbus but extremely difficult to learn about the Taínos. How would you explain this? How do you think the Columbus expedition to the Americas was related to the war against the Moors, the expulsion of the Jews and the Spanish Inquisition? [This might be a good topic for student research.] What might Columbus have thought as he approached Guanahaní? What thoughts might his crew have had? What might the Taínos have thought as they watched Columbus and his men come onto their island? Is there any evidence to suggest that the Taínos thought Columbus was a god? Why has this myth become so widespread? [Students could write a set of interior monologues, contrasting the thoughts of Spaniards and Taínos.] What appears to be the objective of Columbus's first voyage? On January 13 Columbus encounters what he decides is resistance. Why does he presume that these people are Caribs and not Taínos? How does Columbus justify taking slaves? What prevented the Taínos from mounting an effective resistance to Columbus's invasion? What more would you like to learn about the culture of the Taíno? How could you find out?

Write the thoughts of Columbus's Taíno kidnap victims as they arrive in Spain.

Write Caonabó's interior monologue as he is led in chains onto a ship bound for Spain. Recall that he led the first resistance to the Spanish on Bohio.

Write an appropriate epitaph for Columbus. Have students do more research and continue the timeline. Have them choose events on the timeline to research more thoroughly.

The Spanish Fight for Justice in the Indies, by Bartolomé de las Casas, p. 82

According to Montesinos, what is wrong with Spanish rule in the Indies? What does Montesinos think about Native people? Does he believe Native people should rule themselves? How did Montesinos want the Spaniards on the island to change? Did he want them to get out of the Indies? Why are Columbus and the others so upset? Why don't they just ignore Montesinos? What did Montesinos risk?

Write the thoughts of Montesinos preparing for his second sermon. And/or ask students to improvise a discussion between Montesinos and Father Cordoba.

Write the reaction of a Taíno cacique to Montesinos. Does he approve of everything Montesinos says and does?

Encourage students to research Spaniards like Bartolomé de las Casas, author of this adaptation, who fought for Native rights in the Americas.

Also see *Talking Back to Columbus* for other teaching ideas.

Other Teaching Ideas

• At the conclusion of your study of Columbus and consequences, ask students to list at least three things that made them sad, ashamed, powerless or hopeless. Then, on a different sheet of paper, ask them to list at least three things they found inspiring, hopeful or made them feel powerful. In the middle of the room, place a box and tell students it represents a coffin. One by one ask students to come to the center of the room, read their hopeless statements aloud, then place them in the coffin. Next, ask students to share what they wrote that made them feel hopeful. You might use these as the basis for a concluding poem or essay.

• Write on this Winnebago saying: *Holy Mother Earth, the trees and all nature are witness of your thoughts and deeds*. Write a letter to your "mother" telling how you are treating her. How do you plan to change?

• Write on the board the Native saying, *The frog does not drink up the pond in which it lives*. What does this saying mean? Ask children to imagine that the pond represents the whole world, and that the frog is us. What lessons can we draw from this saying for today?

• Hold a trial to assign blame for the Native American holocaust initiated with Columbus's voyages. As defendants, call Columbus, Columbus's men, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the entire system of empire (the use of other peoples and other peoples' lands for private gain), the Taínos of Hispaniola, etc.

Draw up brief lists of charges against these and other groups. [Charges against the Taínos are not easy to find: blame them for failure to adequately resist the colonial onslaught, or for failing to recognize Columbus's enterprise for what it was and thus not killing him off right away. — It's important that you assist students in identifying resources which could be used to show that the Taínos, Caribs and other Native groups did defend themselves.] The teacher

is the prosecutor and the students, in small groups, defendants. In groups, give them an opportunity to prepare a defense against the charges. Before the trial begins, choose a jury of three students, who agree to forgo their group allegiances. Prosecute each group one by one. Allow each group to cross-examine the other groups. Allow the jury to deliberate and reach a verdict.

• Compare the conditions of children in the Americas now with conditions when Columbus arrived. You might begin with a survey of conditions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic or Jamaica (see issues of NACLA *Report on the Americas* — address in *Resources* section.) How did early observers describe living conditions of Taínos, Caribs and others? How do observers describe conditions today? Students might complete a timeline from 1492 to today listing key events that transformed life for Caribbean peoples. Get United Nations documents on the rights of children. Are these rights being maintained? ❐

Katrine Barber, Bill Bigelow, Linda Christensen, Deborah Menkart, and Bob Peterson contributed to this teaching guide.

Biographical Information on Poets

- Jimmie Durham (Wolf Clan Cherokee), author of the book of collected poems, *Columbus Day*.
- Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), author of *Ceremony*.
- N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), first Native American to win the Pulitzer Prize, Regent's Prof. of English at the Univ. of Arizona.
- Wendy Rose (Hopi-Miwok) teaches social science at Fresno City College.
- Leonel Rugama, a Nicaraguan who died in 1970 while fighting for the Sandinista National Liberation Front.
- Gail Tremblay (Onondaga, MicMac and French Canadian), teaches at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash.
- Jo Whitehorse Cochran (Lakota/Norwegian), Artist in Residence in the Seattle public schools, 1992 and 1993.
- Ramona Wilson (Colville Confederated Tribes), Project Director of an American Indian bilingual program in Oakland, CA.

Taking Your Students Beyond the Classroom Walls

Students may want to take their new learning outside the classroom walls. Encourage them to think of ways they might influence change.

• Students might critique books in the school library for race, sex and class bias. They could evaluate the library's books about Native Americans, Columbus and other "explorers." You might organize a field trip to the city or county library. Ask them to write up their findings and suggested alternatives. Students can present these to librarians. Another idea would be for students to launch a parent/teacher/student study group.

• Students might write up a "report card" on various textbooks, or books in the school or local library. [See "Unlearning the Myths that Bind Us," p. 53.] The report cards could be distributed to parents, other teachers, other classes, librarians, the school district's curriculum department or the school board. They might also want to meet with local native organizations to share their report card with them and to find out native perspectives on their work.

• Investigate state and local quincentenary committees. How is their tax money being spent? In Wisconsin, a bill was recently introduced to rename a state highway after Christopher Columbus. How much will this cost? What else could the money be spent on? How is this decision made? How much public input will there be? Students might even want to testify.

• What is being planned in the community for "Columbus Day?" Students could plan an alternative commemoration. In one Cleveland school, students wore black arm bands on a recent October 12. They might take a resolution to the teachers' union or school board urging that Columbus Day not be celebrated, but that instead more multicultural activities be planned. Should there be a "Genocide Day," a "500 Years of Resistance Day," a "Native American Culture Day?" (See Columbus Day lesson above.) The school, or perhaps even a single teacher, could sponsor a writing contest on the meaning of the "encounter" between European and Native people 500 years ago. How should October 12, 1992 be commemorated? How should the *next* 500 years be different from the *last* 500 years? It's important these contests not encourage a kind of individualism that would be antithetical to the cooperative values of Native America. Make sure the contributions of all participants are recognized.

• Students should be encouraged to find out about native people in the local area. What are the active organizations? What issues are they concerned about? How could they support Native Americans who are working for justice?

• Students can be encouraged to submit critiques, report cards or essays to school and local newspapers. People often begin to take their own ideas more seriously when they see them in print.

• Students can write skits, children's books or choreograph dances to perform for other classes or at community events. Others can plan follow-up discussions about the issues raised.

• Teachers can work with students to develop resolutions to take to their unions, professional organizations, school administration or school board. Students might take resolutions to student councils or to PTAs. Resolutions could include provisions that:

- Columbus Day not be celebrated as a holiday that recognizes only the European version of "discovery," and hence, encourages racism;
- Funds be made available to school libraries for purchase of alternative materials, for curriculum departments to hire Native American consultants to bring in new perspectives, and for workshops for teachers and librarians;
- Encourage teachers to offer in their classes alternative, multicultural viewpoints.
- Students be encouraged to ask their teachers and administrations to offer alternative teaching materials. ❐

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Afterword for Teachers by Bill Bigelow

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